

THE PSYCHOSOCIALSPIRITUAL CONDITION
OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

By

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A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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Dedication

To my parents who had a desire to me succeed in all that I attempted to do. I know they are pleased and would be happy for this chapter in my life.

Acknowledgements

In appreciation to those who supported and encouraged me, my advisor Dr. Milton Branch, site team members, Dr. M. Julius Hayes, Dr. Eugene Austin and Rev. Wanda Boulden, MA. Also in special memory the late Rev. Allison Smith a special friend and colleague.

And to the congregation of the Little Zion Baptist Church Hampton, Virginia, the Community of Historical Aberdeen Gardens, Men on the Mainline and the Saturday Academy for Positive Self Development.

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Introduction to the Setting Assignment

Aberdeen Gardens was a New Deal planned community initiated by Hampton Institute (now Hampton University), designed specifically for the resettlement of African-American workers in Newport News and Hampton. In 1934, the Hampton Institute secured a \$245,000 federal grant to create the housing development. It was the only Resettlement Administration community for blacks in Virginia and only the second neighborhood in the nation for blacks financed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Subsistence Homestead Project.

The Aberdeen neighborhood was designed by Hillyard R. Robertson, a black architect from Howard University where it became a model resettlement community in the United States. Charles Duke, a black architect, was name architect-in-charge to design and manage the construction of the composed of 158 brick houses on large lots and the Aberdeen Elementary School. The settlement included several streets, that were named after prominent African Americans: *Lewis Road, Weaver Road, Walker Road, Mary Peake Boulevard, Davis Road, Russell Road, and Langston Boulevard.*

Aberdeen Gardens was a Roosevelt Administration era planned community, designed specifically for the resettlement of African-American workers of the Newport News and Hampton area, who were living in substandard housing. Begun in 1934 and finished by 1937, this unique 110-acre subdivision consists of 158 single-family homes and proposed a school, commercial and community center, and a church, all surrounded by a greenbelt area for subsistence and truck farming.¹ In addition to the Colonial Revival houses, one of the preexisting vernacular farm houses, purchased from the Todd family, became a resettlement residence. The project, sponsored by Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) and funded by the U.S.

Department of the Interior's Division of Subsistence Housing (later transferred to the Resettlement Administration), was planned and designed by Howard University's Hilyard R. Robinson (1899-1986), supervising architect, with Louis B. Walton (1889-1973), consulting architect. Jesse R. Otis, also an African American, acted as program supervisor.

The attractive Colonial Revival architecture of Aberdeen Gardens set within an innovative open garden plan highlights Hilyard R. Robinson's abilities as an important American planner and architect. Born in Washington, D.C., Robinson was one of the best known black architect planner of his day. His involvement with Aberdeen Gardens began with his appointment as senior architect for the RA in 1934. He had attended the Philadelphia Museum and School of Industrial Arts as well as the University of Pennsylvania, and received both Bachelor and Masters of Architecture degrees from Columbia University in 1924 and 1931. One of Robinson's most formative educational experiences came from his postgraduate studies in city planning at the University of Berlin in 1931 and 1932. While in Germany he visited the Bauhaus and was exposed to modernist ideas. Robinson served as head of the Department of Architecture at Howard University from 1926 to 1933. He was responsible for conducting a slum housing survey in the District of Columbia in 1933. Just before his involvement with the RA, he was appointed consulting architect for the National Capital Advisory Committee to select sites for slum clearance (1934). His architectural landmark, Langston Terrace Public Housing Project (1937), which was designed in a Modernist style, and incorporated sculpture, set a national example for inner city public housing. Robinson enjoyed a long career; he designed several Modernist style buildings at Hampton University during the 1950s as well as numerous residences in the Washington, D.C., area.

While Robinson was supervising architect for the project, Louis B. Walton, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture and a partner in the Chicago firm of

Benjamin H. Marshall, seems to have played a significant role as consulting architect (in one project document he is cited as Chief of Special Plans). In several pieces of correspondence Walton was addressed with practical questions about the interior planning of the houses. While it is not entirely clear to what degree he influenced the design of Aberdeen Gardens, Walton seems to have had a supervisory role as a design manager or clerk-of-the-works.

The planning ideas that serve as a foundation for the ultimate design of Aberdeen Gardens are evident in name. The "Garden" refers to Ebenezer Howard's "Garden City" theories expounded in his book *To-morrow* (1898). Howard's intentions, drawn in schematic plans, were realized in the London suburban communities of Letchworth (1903, Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, architects) and Welwyn (1920, Louis de Soissons, architect). Howard's principal idea was to introduce the humanizing element of country space into the urban fringe area to temper the degenerating influence of the city. The planning ideas behind Aberdeen Gardens make a clear reference to the Howard example. Aberdeen Gardens was a subdivision of "house-garden units each home had its garden area in a community that was surrounded by a greenbelt of farmland and woods. Like the English Shredded Wheat Ltd. workers who became Welwyn residents, the black Aberdeen Garden homesteaders, most of which were shipyard workers, were generally struggling to afford decent housing in decaying urban areas.

The growth of the Garden and Greenbelt idea was a reaction to the late-nineteenth-andearly-twentieth-century unplanned urban hodgepodge that resulted in what was perceived as an inhumane and immoral life environment. Howard's theories were partly derived from A. W. N.

Pugin, the mid-nineteenth-century architectural moralist who asserted that the citizens of England's grey industrial cities were being corrupted by the mass of problems that had accompanied the industry revolution of the early nineteenth century. He proposed a return to the

values found in medieval society, a time when man had greater control than the machine. The issue of quality housing for lower and middle classes became of primary concern as industrial countries experienced an exodus of workers from rural to urban areas.

In the United States, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux brought the country into New York City in their triumph of green space, Central Park (1863). This acted as partial relief to the population density of New York City. But worker housing at Lowell mills (Massachusetts, 1840s) or the Pullman factory town (Illinois, 1884) show a direct concern for the well-being of the worker. The development of affordable quality housing for low- and middle-income Americans would be addressed in the twentieth century.

Clarence Stein and Henry Wright, architects and planners, set a precedent for designing quality suburban developments. Radiating roads and building sites with picturesque relationships to open or wooded spaces successfully united the park setting to residential architecture. Their most famous example is the middle-class subdivision at Radburn, New Jersey (1928): here a greater sense of open space was attained by creating a superblock, a large block where lots behind the houses opened onto a green community space.¹ Stein and Wright's Sunnyside Gardens in Long Island, New York (1924-28) also championed the superblock. Open common spaces with pedestrian paths on the interior of the blocks engendered a greater sense of community and enhanced the quality of urban space.² Sunnyside Gardens was designed for white-collar, middleclass families.

project "by blacks -- for blacks," a motto that the Hampton sponsoring group adopted, was unprecedented in the South as well as the United States.

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The planners and architects of the Resettlement Administration (RA) had superb historical examples to choose from for the design of their communities. There was, however, a significant difference between the Stein and Wright examples and the government-funded projects in that the architectural program for resettlement was less sophisticated. The RA had been organized to help ease the substandard housing conditions of farmers and factory workers. The challenge for RA architects and planners was to design a practical small house with the most up-to-date conveniences that would display some aesthetic value in its appearance, all for an affordable price.

Known for its shipbuilding industry and drydocking facilities, Newport News also supported a large work force involved in the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad's coal shipping operations. In the mid-thirties most of the 2,500 black workers of this urban-industrial area lived in dilapidated frame houses that were lighted by coal oil lamps and had no running water, central heating, or bathrooms. While providing the amenities of modern housing represented a great improvement for these workers, the project went further by proposing a transformation of the residents to a "higher social and health level."

By virtue of an all-encompassing plan, the families were to experience the benefits of cleanliness, efficiency, and aesthetics in their well-designed housing; maintain gardens and small livestock on their half-acre lots for self-subsistence, especially during the summer slack months of the shipbuilding industry; and profit from educational opportunity through the planned Aberdeen Elementary School and adult programs offered by Hampton Institute. A screening process for prospective residents was also instituted to insure that the community would include shipyard workers, doctors, lawyers and businessmen--a cross-section of Hampton Roads' black society. One of the most radical aspects of this development that the residents would purchase

their houses financing was set at a three percent interest rate). RA officials appreciated the benefits to a neighborhood where owned; occupation translated into community permanence and pride.

The intent of federal officials and the Hampton sponsoring group was to create a model for other, publicly and privately funded, future-planned resettlements of low-income rural and urban black families, Aberdeen Gardens. While the RA publicly maintained similar goals whether it was building for white or black homesteaders, there was clearly a moral imperative signified in much of the project literature and by the insistence of the Hampton area sponsors that blacks were to be the majority participants in all levels of the project. With great opposition to the seemingly socialistic programs of the New Deal, the RA was treading on dangerous ground by proposing to raise a segment of the black population to a "higher social level. "

Hilyard R. Robinson's utilization of visionary planning philosophies from Ebenezer Howard to Stein and Wright made Aberdeen Gardens a unique RA conception. The fact that the community plan, architectural design, site clearing, building construction, road work, and management was performed by blacks, many of whom would stay on to live at the settlement, sets Aberdeen Garden apart from all other RA projects. A government funded

Aberdeen Gardens is named for Aberdeen Road, the principal transportation corridor that linked the worker-residents with Newport News and its shipbuilding facilities. The project area, just south of the junction of Aberdeen and Sawyer's Swamp roads," was originally the site of several farms. The Todd family farmed an area in the northern section of the project site, while the Curtis farm was adjacent to the south." The Todd farmhouse, built in the 1890s, is included in the district because a large homestead family, the Johnsons, took over the farm and sold produce locally (photo 6). Five separate tracts of land were purchased between April 25, 1935, and January 3, 1938, to complete the project at its largest size. Clearing of the site began in 1935

and about half of the houses were finished by the end of 1936. The Todd farm house was preserved for the project and exists on the northern end of Aberdeen Road in the historic district. The Curtis farm was in the area presently known as Granger Court East. When the federal government bought this land, John G. Curtis moved his house about a half mile south where it still exists, substantially remodeled, at the edge of a 1960s subdivision.

The project site at Aberdeen Road was chosen for several reasons. The land was offered at a low price; there was good soil for farming; and the relatively secluded area insured that the project would satisfy critics who were worried about possible racial tensions.

When Robinson designed the subdivision he organized it around the Aberdeen Road corridor. The irregular shape of the subdivision was longer on the north-south axis than wide on the east-west axis. Five east-west cross streets were laid out perpendicular to the alignment of Aberdeen Road. Two long streets, one block away and paralleling Aberdeen Road were also laid out. The seven streets were given alphabet names at first, from A to G. A Street was the center cross street, B and C streets crossed to the north while E and F crossed to the south. D was the major north-south street on the west, while G matched it on the east.

In 1937, the sponsoring committee decided to rename the streets after prominent black leaders. A street became *Lewis Road* named after Matt N. Lewis, pioneer black journalist for the Newport News Six. *Weaver Road*, formerly B Street, was named for W. B. Weaver who had directed an orphans home in Hampton. C Street became *Walker Road*, after Richmond's renowned Maggie L. Walker, founder of St. Luke's Penny Savings Bank. The long north-south D street, to the west of *Aberdeen Road*, became Mary Peake Boulevard, for her accomplishments as a teacher who taught Hampton's contraband children under the Emancipation Tree. E Street was renamed *Davis Road* after Daniel Webster Davis, Richmond minister, teacher, and poet. The southernmost cross street, formerly F Street, became *Russell Road* after archdeacon James S.

Russell, founder and president of St. Paul's Normal and Industrial School in Lawrenceville. The eastern, north-south, G Street became *Langston Boulevard*, celebrating the accomplishments of John Mercer Langston, the first president of Virginia State College and one-time congressman from Virginia.

All roadways in the subdivision (except for the preexisting Aberdeen Road) were designed with wide grassy medians. This design further enhanced the open space qualities provided by planning the houses on large superblocks. In time small trees and shrubs grew up on the medians, also complementing the "green" intentions of the planners. Today, despite the widening of Aberdeen Road, a major thoroughfare, all of the original street planning is intact to its completion date of 1938.

Within this open-space street plan, surrounded by a band of older wooded areas and farm fields, stood the 158 houses. Each house sat at the front of its lot, which measured about 75 feet across and 220 to 290 feet deep. The resulting blocks were very large by contemporary standards. When the land was developed into gardens, interspersed with many of the older trees and punctuated by small chicken coops, it created a superblock green space that was unique to this subdivision. Unlike the manicured superblock lawns of Stein and Wright's Radburn and Sunnyside Gardens, Aberdeen Gardens superblocks were thriving cultivation areas, an optimistic symbol of prosperity. The idea of private property was maintained at property borders by squarepatterned wire fence, but the overall character was of a shared open space. Robinson made sure not to have any houses facing Aberdeen Road, perhaps he knew that it was destined to become the large improved corridor that it is today. While a few of these large lots have been subdivided, mostly along Aberdeen Road where several smaller lots have their houses facing the street, virtually all of the interior areas of the large blocks are intact.

Aberdeen Gardens included garden plots for each resident and a greenbelt area where larger truck farming was planned. In addition to growing produce, residents were encouraged to maintain small livestock. Chicken coops were built for each property. Few have survived, but an almost completely intact example exists behind 3 Russell Road. The federal government provided twelve mules, twelve cows, one-thousand hens, and twenty-five thousand chicks. Pigs were purchased later and kept mostly in the eastern area of the greenbelt. In addition to livestock, apple, pear, and peach trees were provided for an orchard area, as well as strawberry and blackberry plants.

The greenbelt around Aberdeen Gardens remained wooded or farmland until the 1950s. Presently several later subdivisions exist adjacent to the original settlement. In the former greenbelt area on the northwest side is Greenwood Farms, built on reclaimed swampland. On the southwest Granger Court occupies the former farm greenbelt area, and Granger Court East, which lies to the south and east of Aberdeen, was also a farm area. On the northeast edges of the subdivision is a small subdivision called East Aberdeen Gardens. Some houses in these areas may date as early as 1945-1950. Very little was developed beyond the original area until after World War II. The difference in the post-war styles of architecture surrounding Aberdeen Gardens helps to define visually the edges of the district.

Aberdeen Road does not run through the subdivision in a straight tangent. The road curves 20 degrees to the west between the northern cross streets of Weaver and Walker roads. This curve created a ready-made opportunity to site a central community area, the precinct that was to include school, community center, and church. The lot set aside from residential use is roughly in the shape of a keystone. The church and separate community center was never built. But an attractive Colonial Revival school was finished that also functioned as a community meeting place. The school was remodeled several times beginning in the 1950s and was replaced

by a larger building in the 1970s. Since there is very little of the original building intact it is considered noncontributing.

Across from the school is the small commercial area that was allotted a medium sized lot. Originally the building accommodated a community grocery store, barber shop, and tavern. Built in the 1940s, this commercial building replaced an even more modest store. The first store operated out of an old farm building that stood on the east side of Aberdeen Road between East Weaver and East Lewis Roads. The present commercial building at Aberdeen Road has undergone substantial remodeling since the 1940s. Because the building lacks architectural integrity, it is considered noncontributing to the district.

A whole strain of small-house design in American architecture had been developing since the mid-nineteenth century. An example of this trend is found in A. J. Downing's *Cottage -S* (1842), which expounded the romantic idea of a medium-sized house in a country setting. Later in the century, one of many pattern books available, *Specimen Book of One Hundred Architectural Designs*, by A. J. Bicknell & Co. of New York (1879), adopted Downing's aesthetic by including plans for the "Cheap Country Cottage," a small house of four to five rooms, incorporating some Downing architectural details, to create a dressed-up small house for the mass public. The growing American middle class produced a market for the catalog-ready Sears and Alladin kit houses, some of which were small, designed for a limited budget and the restricted space of urban and suburban lots. The Great Depression brought an intense focus on small house design. With the market for medium and large architect-designed houses diminishing, the architectural community became more involved in perfecting small house plans. The appreciation of the small house market was evident in many architectural publications throughout the 1930s: "Architects needed to Humanize the Small House" (*Architecture and Engineering*, January 1936, 55); "Low cost home problem: fifteen items essential to the solution

of the small house plan" (Hertz, Architecture and -- Engineering, July 1937, 72); "Small house, responsibility and opportunity" (Saylor, Architecture, April 1936, 209-210); "Small houses for civilized Americans; analysis of space requirements and minimum standards, with eight basic floor plans and exteriors". (Fordyce and Hamby, Architectural Forum, January 1936, 1-40). The cited examples above are just a sampling of articles that grappled with the needs of the affordable house to match the American dream.

Subsistence housing sponsored by the federal government during the Depression selectively inherited progressive design philosophies and experimented with the small house. The small house architecture of the RA was practical and designed to harmonize with regional character and custom. In an effort to fit the different requirements of each project the RA conducted surveys to ascertain the preferences of residents. Attention was given to "rooms and room uses," "climatic factors," and site "orientation." In addition to the practical concerns were the aesthetic qualities of design. The design approach was defined by Secretary Henry A. Wallace in The Architectural Forum: Economy does not imply the absence of beauty or taste. No small house is ever completely satisfactory if it is also not attractive; and no housing problem is ever solved that does not install the family amidst homelike surroundings. But little additional is required to obtain aesthetic satisfaction. Care in the proportioning of the plan units, the mass of the house, the size and the arrangement of the openings or the selection of harmonious colors, costs nothing extra. The resulting attractiveness is a decided incentive toward encouraging the occupants to maintain and enhance this attractiveness with furnishings and plantings.¹³

In the same Architectural Forum article various houses are showcased, including photographs, specifications, and interior plans. For the Gardendale Homesteads, near Birmingham, Alabama, a rammed-earth method of construction was used and the flat- roofed houses looked decidedly modern. A similar flat-top design was used for an agricultural-

industrial community near Hightstown, New Jersey. In contrast to these modern-styled houses are the pitched-roof frame houses at Penderlea Homesteads near Wilmington, Delaware and the traditional pitched-roof, exterior chimney, stone houses for the Cumberland Homesteads near Crossville, Tennessee. The latter examples appear to reflect the vernacular building styles of their respective regions. Aberdeen Gardens displays Virginia's most celebrated building element: the brick. The design of Aberdeen Gardens houses is Colonial Revival, uniquely arranged, in many cases, as a "double house" where the side garages of two units share a party wall.

The Aberdeen Garden houses were meant to be embodiments of the "local traditional style" united with the best elements from the "modern functional style."¹¹ It was thought by federal planners that this combination subjected the homesteader to a "minimum hazard of aesthetic depreciation." A typical house in the subdivision, often referred to as a "house-garden" unit, was of brick construction, one-and-a-half stories, and was rectangular with an attached garage. The first floor was designed as large open space to maximize cross-ventilation. The plan included a sitting or bedroom, a combination living, dining, and kitchen area, an entry hall, a bathroom, and a closet. A stairwell led from the entry hall to the second floor where there were two bedrooms and a storage closet.

Aberdeen Garden's simple Colonial-styled houses were complemented by the traditional design of Aberdeen Elementary School. The school's design was organized around a projecting, pediment, portico entry which include a three-bay brick arcade with keystones. The building's classrooms were arranged in wings that projected perpendicular to the center section. While simple in execution, the historical reference of the original school building to Virginia's community anchor, the classically-styled courthouse, was clear. To meet the needs of a growing community, the old school was enlarged and then later replaced in the 1970s. Aberdeen Gardens Houses.

In an effort to avoid the mechanical repetition of facades and plans, and to provide dwellings for different-size families, Aberdeen Gardens includes a variety of plans to provide for the one-and-a-half story, three-, four- and five-room houses." All houses included a garage. Some houses were detached while many houses shared a common wall. The houses that were attached were referred to as "double houses." The double house consisted of two rectangular houses with side garages sharing a party wall. The largest house, the five-room plan (total of twenty-three), was built in two versions. One is recognizable by its three widely-spaced, frontfacade, upper sash, and the more common version includes four, front-facade, upper sash. There were eighty-three four-room houses built, the greatest number of any plan. One version (total of seventy) had no front porch and are easily identified by its asymmetrical three-bay, front facade. This was the only plan type with a front, blank, upper half story. Only thirteen four-room plan houses with a three-bay porches were built. The smallest house was the three-room plan, which has the same three, small, front-facade, upper sash as the five-room plan, but the scale of the three room house, discernible by the steeper roof pitch, is a telltale sign of its smaller size.

In planning the house sites, the designers used a loose pattern involving the plan types. While the double houses were built throughout the settlement area, all street junctions are punctuated by either a three-room or four-room double house on both sides of the street, perhaps a gesture to give the cross streets a firm definition.¹⁶ The cross streets, Russell, Davis, Lewis, and Weaver, where they are adjacent to Aberdeen Road, include only double houses." On the long streets, Langston and Mary Peake, monotony is avoided by mixing double and detached houses of all plans. One distinctive rule is that the four-room house with porch is not found in the area west of Aberdeen Road and the five-room house with four upper sash is not included on the east side of the development.

The stylistic elements of the Aberdeen Gardens house were simple. All of the houses were based loosely on the popular Colonial Revival style. The architectural design of these house-garden units is an embodiment of the best from local traditional style together with the best from modern functional style, combining the aesthetic and the practical in a way that subjects the homesteader to the minimum of hazard of aesthetic depreciation. The homesteader is investing in a type of house, the architectural style of which, after 250 years of constant employment, is still most in demand for the best type of building."

Most of the houses have an asymmetrical primary facade that could be interpreted as a traditional hall-parlor house, which abounded in Virginia. The most developed stylistic features included a houndstooth cornice band on the front facade; varied brick bond work: five and six course American, English, and some Flemish; jack arches over all wall openings; six-panel doors, some with upper glass lights; a Jacobean-styled, black, sheet metal, front door lamp; sixlight, casement, wood sash and six-over-six double-hung, wood sash; originally, all roofs were clad with square-end cedar shingles; garage doors were constructed of vertical boards that opened as a single panel, suspended on heavy duty springs.

The interior plan for the three-, four- and five-room houses was simple and very functional. The three room plan featured a side-passage entry with stairwell in the entrance hall and a bathroom beneath the stairs. The first floor was a multi-purpose living area, including a wall for kitchen appliance space and sink, combined with a living room/dining room area. The second floor was divided into two bedrooms. The most popular four-room house plan was an extension of three-room house in that it added a bay on the other side of the entry. The second downstairs room was designed to be either a sitting room or an extra bedroom. The upstairs consisted of two bedrooms, one on either side of the stair hall.

The five-room house, recognizable by its four six-light casement windows, was nearly identical in plan to the four-room house with the exception that one of the two upstairs spaces was partitioned lengthwise to create two small bedrooms.

Some of the detached houses differed from the generic three-room principal plan. All of the four- and five-room houses that were detached had a symmetrical, three-bay facade with a two-run, central stair. The room arrangements were virtually identical to the side-stair version, but the interior spaces on either side of the central stair were equally divided. In general, these houses were deeper than the other plan.

Access to the garage in all plans is through a covered porch area. The porches were placed at the rear of the houses, accessed from the kitchen /living room to increase cross ventilation in the primary living space of the house.

The prosperity and well-being of Aberdeen Garden residents is exhibited by improvements that have been made to the houses in the past several decades. Much of the distinctive character of the alterations comes from the fact that most of the houses became resident- owned. Frame additions designed by Hampton University Architecture School students are on several houses; garages have been converted into living space in some cases; and the addition of dormers follows in the spirit of the Colonial Revival style. Very few of the original dwellings, however, have been altered to the degree that they have lost their integrity.

The success of Aberdeen Gardens is evident in the fact that there is a strong community of homesteader children who chose to live in Aberdeen or nearby. While some Aberdeen Garden houses have undergone typical maintenance alterations, the neighborhood is enhanced by the mature shade trees, large oaks and maples, that stand on the wide grass boulevard medians and surround the houses. Aberdeen Gardens is a historic symbol of African- American pride. It is an

example of innovative American planning, a model that would still prove valuable if it were applied to current housing problem.

Challenge Statement

Location

As pastor of Little Zion Baptist Church located in Hampton Virginian

Issues

Currently, in the Historical Aberdeen Garden community the crime rate has risen to 360 violent crimes committed.

The overall crime rate in Aberdeen is 35% higher than the national average, therefore the need of a program to address and attack the rate of crime committed by African American males cross generational is needed. Many of the young as well as older males who committed these crimes,

are those who have no other outlet and are being led by those who are repeated offenders or gang related members.

Solution

This demonstration project will the “Men of David” will the address Pyschosocialspiritual Condition of David in comparison to the lives of African American males within the Historical Aberdeen Gardens community; though daily Life Lessons and Personal Development.

Preliminary Analysis of the Challenge Statement

Aberdeen Gardens is a New Deal Resettlement Community. It was the original model plan for housing offered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934 following the Great Depression. It remains the only intact community that was “Built by Blacks, for Blacks.” Many of the early residents were Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock defense workers. President Roosevelt wanted to ensure that African American workers had decent places to live; and Eleanor Roosevelt showed her keen interest by personally visiting the neighborhood.

Currently, in this Historical community the crime rate has risen to 360 violent crimes committed. The overall crime rate in Aberdeen is 35% higher than the national average, therefore the need of a program to address and attack the rate of crime committed by African American

males is needed. Many of the young men who committed these crimes, are those who have no other outlet and are being led by those who are repeated offenders or gang related members.

Within the African American Male community of district 10 and Little Zion Baptist Church there are current conditions in life affect the Psycho- the study of the mind. This area in psychology holds the belief that there is a connection between sensation and emotion and behavior. Functionalism. This area in psychology suggests the idea that the human brain is much like a computer, designed to carry out specific functions. Psychoanalysis. This psychology school of thought was created by Sigmund Freud, and believes in the rigorous probing of an individual's personal problems, motives, goals and attitudes as a way to heal the mind. Behaviorism. Proponents of this area of psychology essentially hold that all human behavior is learned from one's surrounding context and environment. Humanism. This much more recent psychology school of thought came as a reaction to behaviorism and Psychoanalysis, and emphasizes the importance of values, intentions, and meaning in the individual. The concept of the "self" is a central focus for most humanistic psychologists. Cognitivism. This area in psychology believes that psychology should be concerned with a person's internal representations of the world and with the internal or functional organization of the mind.

In Dr. James H. Harris writing on "Preaching Liberation" Harris states that, the black male has a greater chance of being murdered, dropping out of school, going to prison and dying at an early age than any other group. The practical implication of this cause for alarm because without serious intervention, the demise of the black male will gradually become a reality. While some argue that there is a conspiracy to destroy black males, others suggest that the black male is destroying himself. As the debate continues, there is a prevailing torpor in the church, community and throughout society that has allowed this issue to fester to the point of implosion.

When a comparative analysis of the educational and socioeconomic status of black and white males is made, the black male seems disproportionately represented by represented descriptive statistics with negative connotation. To save the African American males with in this community a plan has to be devised. Those who desire another chance need the support of not only the church but the community to inform them that life doesn't have to end with repeated violence or incarceration. This is where David, a man after God's heart is established. David was a son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah. He was a courageous youth who slew a lion, a bear, and the Philistine giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17). David was chosen and anointed to be king of Israel. Like Saul, in his adult life he was guilty of grave crimes, but, unlike Saul, he was capable of true contrition.

David had his own frailties, shortcomings and challenges in his life. David was not a perfect man, but a man who knew that God had a purpose for his life and had a desire to fulfill the purpose. There are many today sitting in our churches who have grown so cold spiritually and become so comfortable that they do not realize that in God's sight they are sinners. We not only need a Savior, but we also need daily cleansing. Paul said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells" (Romans 7:18). David went to the root of the matter. He confessed that he had a sin nature. God is not interested in what you've been through on the surface. You may be baptized and be nothing in the world but a baptized sinner, unsaved. You may be a member of a church, but that is all exterior. You still could be lost. You may have committed or even been a part of a crime committed but there still is hope. David said, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Psalm 51: 7. Like us, David was a man who often failed, who was subject to temptation and to sin. Like us, David knew despair and fear, doubt and loneliness. Like us, David had a personal relationship with the Lord—and found in that relationship the secret of living above and beyond his potential.

Part 2

General Reflection Questions

Little Zion Baptist Church is a Missionary based church. We stand upon the Matthew 28-18-20, our mission is to Reach Them, Teach Them and Keep Them. We are also a Five-Fold ministry church. Believing and exercises the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. To some people the Spirit gives a message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives a message of knowledge. To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. To others he gives the power to do miracles. To

others he gives the ability to prophesy. To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart. To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before. And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages. All the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives gifts to each person, just as he decides. 1 Corinthian 12: 4-11.

2. Over the past 11 years' great change has occurred in the congregational life of Little Zion. Prior to my arrive, Little Zion was a traditional Baptist church, however, through teaching and introducing the church to worship, Little Zion has moved from a silent church to worshipping congregation. As for missions, Little Zion has developed a stronger domestic and foreign missions' ministry. Providing a food bank ministry for those in the local community of district 10 along with those outside of the congregational area. Within the church ministry, several ministry programs along with leadership has evolved. Within the young ministry the daughters of Zion and ministry to provide young women with faith based mentorship and development. Next the Pastors Academy is a ministry designated for mentorship, life skills training to young men within the congregation and community. As a history making event, Little Zion now has male as well as female deacons to support the spiritual ministry of the church.

The shaping of the ministry of Little Zion can be contributed to several means. First becoming an active part of the Tidewater/Peninsula Baptist Association. This allowed the members of Little Zion to develop friendship and fellowships with other congregation, not only in their surrounding area but from others locals in the Hampton Roads area. Within these fellowships, Little Zion experience the opportunity to witness how other congregations worship, provide ministry and grow as a people. Secondly, the Virginia Baptist State Convention also provided outside leadership and guidance to Little Zion promoting growth within the

congregation. This organization exposed Little Zion to a new meaning of church and its function. VABSC offers quarterly training, as well as in-services and state convention. At the state convention, the congregation and or delegates have an opportunity again to growth spiritually, theological and emotionally as people of God. Within the convention, members of Little Zion, have became organization presidents, worked in development areas of the convention, and presented at state convention.

Individual pastors or ministers that have shaped the spirituality of Little Zion have been Rev. Rita Twigs. Rev. Twigs ministered not only to the women of Little Zion during their Annual Women's conference but also touched the men and breakdown some preconceived notions that women should not preach the Gospel. That has been one of the greatest hurdles achieved with this congregation, "Women in Leadership". Secondly another minister that has touched the lives of Little Zion is the president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Dr. James Perkins. Dr. Perkins can for the VA Fellowship Conference revival. Little Zion had never experience being in the presence of such a well-known preacher lead along the president of an organization. This event gave Little Zion a greater feeling of self-worth and spiritual proudness that they had the president of the national convention preaching in the church.

Currently, Little Zion is a congregation that is getting along with one another. Although they have some differences of opinion, for the foremost, Little Zion has experienced enough controversy from the past to where at the present just want to get along. However, there is still more work to be done. As the ministry grows the facility in which we worship in needs to grow. The facility of Little Zion has now become obsolete. With a growing congregation and potential of new ministries to be added to the church to serve the community, a larger facility is needed. However, there are some who oppose the larger facility to attract more people. There are few people who desire for Little Zion to remain, "Little" in mindset and numbers. Little Zion at one

point experienced a fast growth of people that led to the demise of the former pastor and a three way spilt of the church. Therefore, this is now hindering the forward move and development of new programs and expansion of current ministerial programs at Little Zion.

A program or rule of thought that could best describe Little Zion at the present would be “Satisfaction”. They have now become content and satisfied right where they are. They now have no motivation to move forward nor understand the vision God has given the undersheperd of the congregation, they are content. The church has grown from it’s troubling moments, spiritually has healed and financially are now comfortable; however, there is still more work to do.

Ministerial Competencies

Competency 11 Witness or Evangelist.

Example

Within the context of the Men of David. Individuals working with program, teaching lessons or providing mentorship must be willing to confess his or her fundamental faith commitment. Many of the persons served through Men of David are those who have experience tragedy, loss of family and personal setbacks. Men of David provides an outlet for persons to express their challenges in a non-threatening or judgement environment along with meeting persons who have similarly experiences, which is Life Example or Application. Those who have experience David in their lives can develop a relationship with those of the same like mindedness.

Competency 12 Administrator

Visionary

There are several competencies that are related to the Men of David project. First looking beyond who we see and what has occurred in their lives, to promote a new beginning. Setting

realistic goals for persons being served is important, developing a team approach to the components within the program, understand the mission and vision along with developing an effective group dynamic approach with persons within the groups. Next to possess strong organization and effective communication not only with the members of the program but also those being served.

Competency 13 Professional

Proficient

Within Men of David, organization, openness and non judgement behavior is key within the program. Being able to listen and not hear individuals. Being fair and honest with persons and following through with whatever has been promised, in other words, we must hold ourselves accountable.

Competency 14 Pastoral Skills

Understanding

One of the key competencies needed within Men of David is an ability to provide pastoral care that respect diversity and difference including. But not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual/religious practices.

Competency 15 Interpersonal Skills

Interactive

Self Esteem building is one of the components with Men of David. Those who have been incarcerated or released from the Foster Care System with no support base need someone who is

interactive, meaning maintain and enhance the self-esteem of others. Building the self-worth of an individual.

Competency 16 Faith-Rooted Community Organizer

Motivator

Having a clear understanding of the life of David. His purpose, frailties, abilities, strengths and weakness, success and failures are important to the development of the young men within the program. Helping young men develop their own personal faith in God and spiritual temperament. What they can handle and not, identifying their limitations and developing a strategy to address. As a Faith-Rooted Community Organizer, commitment to the cause and the purpose, understanding the theological differences of those who come to the program and/or have a desire to support the cause and finally utilizing the spiritual gifts obtained but not under estimating the potential of others who may have spiritual gifts to assist in the building of the program.

Introduction (Thesis)

David was a son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah. He was a courageous youth who slew a lion, a bear, and the Philistine giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17). David was chosen and anointed to be king of Israel. Like Saul, in his adult life he was guilty of grave crimes, but, unlike Saul, he was capable of true contrition.

David had his own frailties, shortcomings and challenges in his life. David was not a perfect man, but a man who knew that God had a purpose for his life and had a desire to fulfill the purpose.

Men of David is designed to see African American Males at their current condition in life and begin to address the Psycho- the study of the mind.. This area in psychology holds the belief that there is a connection between sensation and emotion and behavior. Functionalism. This area in psychology suggests the idea that the human brain is much like a computer, designed to carry out specific functions. Psychoanalysis, this psychology school of thought was created by Sigmund Freud, and believes in the rigorous probing of an individual's personal problems, motives, goals and attitudes to heal the mind. Behaviorism. Proponents of this area of psychology essentially hold that all human behavior is learned from one's surrounding context

and environment. Humanism. This much more recent psychology school of thought came as a reaction to behaviorism and Psychoanalysis, and emphasizes the importance of values, intentions, and meaning in the individual. The concept of the “self” is a central focus for most humanistic psychologists.

¹ <http://www.psychologymajors.com/psychology-the-study-of-the-human-mind#sthash.ECyX9M6x.dpuf>

Cognitivism, this area in psychology believes that psychology should be concerned with a person's internal representations of the world and with the internal or functional organization of the mind.¹ Social- How adequate is the patient's current support system. What is the current status of relationships with important figures? What are the possible peer influences? Consider the patient's current housing arrangement. Comment on vocational/financial status. Comment on any relevant legal problems. Consider the role of agencies (.e.g. Veteran's Administration, Child Protective Services, Criminal Justice System) on the patient. Comment on cultural influences that may impact the current situation and that might impact treatment.

Spirit, comment on the role of spirituality in the individual's life. Is the individual and in this case the African American Male affiliated with a spiritual community of some sort? How does spirituality contribute to the ability to hope, their position on suicide if relevant, or their contact with a supportive or ethnic community?

Ethnic identity is a significant psychological variable for the study of African Americans in the United States and often associated with psychological health. However, the nature of this relationship is sometimes unclear. One reason for the confusion may be that ethnic identity is

¹ <http://www.psychologymajors.com/psychology-the-study-of-the-human-mind#sthash.ECyX9M6x.dpuf>
(Isa. 16:5; Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 37:24–28 (D&C 132:39).

often confounded with acculturation as they are sometimes used interchangeably in research. Because of this confounding problem, it is not clear whether the relationship between ethnic identity and psychological health is really a reflection of ethnic identity or social, physiological or spiritual identity confounded with acculturation.

Therefore, Psycho-Social-Spiritual Structuralism condition to develop the purpose God has for their lives though Faith Based Life Skills Training and Development. “Men of David” Despite these disasters, David’s reign was the most brilliant of Israelite history, for (1) he united the tribes into one nation, (2) he secured undisputed possession of the country, (3) he based the government on the true religion so that the will of God was the law of Israel. For these reasons, David’s reign was later regarded as the nation’s golden age and the type of the more glorious age when the Messiah would come.

David’s life illustrates the need for all persons to endure in righteousness to the end. As a youth, he was said to be a man after the Lord’s “own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14); as a man, he spoke by the Spirit and had many revelations. But he paid a heavy price for his disobedience to the commandments of God.

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³ (Isa. 16:5; Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 37:24–28⁴ (D&C 132:39).

Evaluation Proposal
for the
PsychosocialSpiritual Condition of the African American Male in the 21st Century
“Men of David”

1. 15 Participants will be given a pre-and post-test evaluation at the beginning of each session to measure the understanding and retainment of the information provided
2. 15 Participants will participate in group discussion to determine the relevance of the information to their personal lives and how they would use the techniques given. i.e vignette
3. 15 Participants will be given a survey to determine their strengths and weakness
4. Selected participants will take part in a 6 month after care to track their success using the techniques from the “Men of David”
5. Men of David effectiveness will also be measured by statistical information regarding the target area and participants to the reduction of negative behavior and efficacy in community involvement.

Men of David Program Objectives/Outcomes

Understanding the PsychoSocialSpiritual Condition of the African American Male in the 21st Century

Each Objective and Outcome is relevant to the understanding the Psychological, Social, and Spiritual condition of the African American Male in the 21st Century.

Program Objective

Identity and Self Esteem Building – “I know my Self Worth” It’s not who you are but whose you are

Outcome: Participants will learn skills building personal esteem and self-worth. Participants will also identify triggers that activate low esteem and self-worth principles in their lives. Participants will be able to determine what is personal Self Worth build Self Esteem. What lead to the Self Worth development in the life of David?

Outcome scripture: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13

Identity development, is a process of individual change that can occur along social, cultural, and psychological domains, and is a key function of adolescence in young adulthood.

According to Erikson (1968), identity is achieved after a period of exploration and experimentation, typically during adolescence, and leads to various decisions and commitments. From Erikson's point of view, identity development is a time when people try to determine what is unique and special about them. Individuals try to discover who they are, what their strengths are, and which types of roles they are best suited to play for the rest of their lives.

When males who can successfully establish an identity not only enter adulthood with a secure sense of self that guides their adult development, behavior, and interpersonal relationships, but they also tend to be more psychologically healthy and can engage in their personal development of self. Therefore, building their self-esteem as a male. (Adams, Gullota, & Montemayor, 1992; Marcia et al., 1994).

For men of color, the development of an ethnic identity is a critical component of identity development and is associated with psychological health. Phinney in a 1996 article defines ethnic identity as "*an enduring, fundamental aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings associated with that membership*" (p. 923). Ethnic identity as for men of color or the African American Male is essentially the sense of identity that comes from one's membership in an ethnic group. Furthermore, the ethnic identity of the African American Male refers to the infusion of their ethnic group membership and the feelings associated with that membership into self-perception and overall identity (Yancey, Aneshensel, & Driscoll, 2001). This process of self-perception necessitates a process that has been described as an essential human need for men of color because it provides the African American Males a sense of belonging and historical continuity and endurance (Smith, 1991).

According to Erikson (1950), ethnic identity formation is a process located both in the core of the individual and in his communal culture as an African American Male. For an African American Male, the formation of an ethnic identity can be conceptualized as a distinct form of

identity development, a process taking place over time as individuals explore and make decisions about the role of ethnicity in their lives (Phinney, 1990).

Ethnic identity is a significant psychological variable for the study of African Americans Males in the United States (US) and one of the most prominent variables in research involving US ethnic groups (Greig, 2003; Phinney, 1990, 1996). In the research findings indicate ethnic identity is most predictive of what constitutes a sense of self in African Americans Males(Aries & Morehead, 1989). Not only do African Americans Males rate ethnicity as an issue of importance in the formation of their identity (Phinney & Alipuria, 1990), but ethnic identity has been shown to predict numerous important psychosocial outcomes in African American young adults such as perceptions of racial bias, academic efficacy, school performance moral development, self-esteem, optimism, and coping skills. (Moreland & Leach, 2001Beale Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001; Sandoval, Gutkin, & Naumann, 1997), Roberts et al., 1999).

There are several theoretical models that have been proposed to describe and explain how African Americans Males come to identify with their ethnic/racial group. Some of these models emphasize the connections associated with the unique experience of being African American in a society that is not primarily African American (Sellers et al., 1998b). One example of this type of model is the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity. The MMRI defines racial identity as that part of the person's self-concept that is related to in the case of the African American Male, his membership within a race. It is concerned with both the significance the individual places on race in defining himself and the interpretations of what it means to be Black. Therefore the MMRI proposes four dimensions of racial identity in African Americans: the salience of identity; the centrality of the identity; the ideology associated with the identity; and the regard in which the person holds African Americans. (Sellers et al., 1998b).

Other models emphasize the importance of culture and identity, but view ethnic group membership as one example of a more universal process of identity development that all ethnic groups, including European Americans, go through (e.g., Phinney, 1992). One such model is Phinney's (1992) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Model. Within Phinney's EIM questions are discussed to explore the views of the African Male as it is related to his cultural relational group:

I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs. I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group. I understand well what my ethnic group membership means to me. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group. Though these types of models have different labels attached to them and varying conceptual frameworks, the foundational bases are quite similar.

These foundational aspects will be the focus of this section. Models Emphasizing the Unique Experience of Being African American Males, in models that are specific to African Americans, ethnic identity has been defined as the extent to which an individual holds positive, negative, or mixed attitudes toward his or her own racial or cultural group and his or her place in it (Carter & Helms, 1988). This ethnic group identification refers to the psychological attachment associated with individuals sharing an implicit understanding of what it means to be African American Males (Sanders Thompson, 2001). The concept of ethnic identity is not simplistic in that not all African Americans choose to identify with the group, nor do all African Americans have equivalent levels of identification with the group. A number of researchers have formulated models of ethnic identity aimed at capturing the varying nature of ethnic identification across the

African American community as well as its developmental evolution (Hyers, 2001). Among those are Cross' model of Nigrescence, Helms' Model of Racial Identity Development, and Sellers' Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity. In these models, racial identity is comprised of attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward oneself as a member a racial group and toward members of the dominant racial group. The way one's racial identity is integrated into one's personality depends on several factors such as family, community, society, and the manner in which these important others validate, deny, or ignore this aspect of one's identity (Cross, 1978)

Self-esteem has been referred to at various times in the literature as self-concept, sense of worth, and self-worth. Hattie (1992) viewed self-esteem as the process by which individuals consider all aspects of life as important and have the confidence and fortitude to fulfill life's expectations. It reflects our ability to participate in evaluative self enhancement that confirms or disconfirms our self-appraisals from others (Major, 1998).

Self-esteem has been related other factors that influence human development, such as gender, social class, racial identity, and depression (Blake & Darling, 1994; Garibaldi, 1992; Munford, 1994). Adolescence is a period of dramatic change that often sets the stage for losses in positive feelings of self-worth (self-esteem) (Rhodes, Roffman, Reddy, and Fredriksen, 2004). The identity struggles and egocentrism of adolescence can contribute to painful emotions, and a greater emphasis on peer relations often ignites youth's concerns about their own social skills and others' sincerity and allegiances (Way, 1998). These changes appear to be particularly difficult for young adolescents, who are often coping simultaneously with the onset of puberty and the transition to an unfamiliar and possibly stressful middle school setting (Seidman, Allen, Aber, Mitchell, & Feinman, 1994).

Negative views of the self, in turn, constitute a risk factor for emotional difficulties (e.g.

depression) and engage in maladaptive behaviors (e.g. delinquency) (Harter, 1999). Steep declines in self-esteem, however, are neither universal nor inevitable, and a range of individual and contextual factors appears to influence both the direction and magnitude of change (Hirsch & Dubois, 1991). Individual background variables such as gender, race, and social class have been shown to play important roles in determining trajectories of adolescent self-esteem (DuBois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale, & Hardesty, 2002). For example, although early studies suggested that African American and ethnic minority adolescents suffered from steeper declines in self-image relative to European Americans, more recent work indicates that the self-esteem of African American adolescents is comparable to or even higher than that of European American peers (Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000 and Twenge & Crocker, 2002). Some studies have found African American teenagers, for example, to have a higher opinion of themselves when they go to schools in which African Americans are a majority (Ward, 2000). Research on resonance and dissonance at the neighborhood level has indicated a self esteem advantage for youth living in communities where they are part of the ethnic majority (Duncan, 1994).

The high school transition can be difficult for African American males, who are simultaneously coping with the challenges of adolescence, the need to establish a firm sense of identity (Erikson, 1963), and with the development of racial identity (Cross, 1978, 1991). Witherspoon and Speight (1997) studied the extent to which racial identity, self-esteem, and academic self-concept were related to academic achievement for 86 African American high school students participating in Upward Bound programs at two medium-size universities in the Midwest. They found a linear relationship between self esteem and academic self-concept: as self-esteem increased or decreased, academic self concept increased or decreased (Witherspoon, Speight, 1997). They concluded that SelfBuilding Self-Esteem had a greater

impact on the academic self-concept of African American high school students than did family support and peer support (Witherspoon, Speight, 1997).

High levels of self-esteem are considered critical for successful African American males to combat the racial discrimination and prejudice they experience as they work towards their intended life goals (Blake & Darling, 2000). Therefore, Lee and Bailey (1997) underscored the need for future research that illuminates the issues and factors that affect self-esteem in a positive manner. To date, most research has been correlational in nature, and thus reveals relationships rather than causal factors (Lee & Bailey, 1997).

When African American males feel more connected to their environment, they are more likely to have higher levels of racial identity and higher levels of self-esteem (Munford, 1994). Thus, high levels of self-esteem allow African American males to develop a strong sense of belonging (Ancis, 2000).

An African American male's sense of belonging is affected by the proximity of his family and the level of support the family provides (Mizell, 1999). When they live in supportive family environments, they are more likely to display high levels of self-esteem and main high levels of academic self-concept (Harvey & Coleman, 1997). Family kinship provides many basic needs, including financial support, childcare, and appropriate role models for fatherless children (Huff-Corzine, Corzine, & Moore, 1991).

Though many African American families experience social isolation and economic disadvantage, the kinship network provides its members the opportunity to maintain a high level of self-esteem (Haveman & Wolfe, 1994). Ellison (1993) identified religion as an integral part of the African American community. The kinship network manifests itself in the rituals and expressiveness of the African American church, and many African American males have found

social support and status through participation in religious services (Ellison, 1993). The social network and support found within the African American church improves self-confidence and provides examples of successful role models for young African American males (Harris, 1994). This translates to higher levels of educational and occupational attainment and higher levels of self-esteem (Graham, 1994). Unfortunately, the widespread lack of religious participation for adolescent African American males has a negative effect on their sense of personal mastery and can extend into their adult lives (Franklin & Mizzell, 1995). Programs to enhance self-esteem of young African American males may have only limited success when based in religious institutions due to this lack of participation (Franklin & Mizzell, 1995).

God is known for taking the ordinary and making it extraordinary. Throughout scripture God used ordinary men to affect His kingdom in extraordinary ways. There was one thing however, that set them apart. If we look carefully, we can see something they had in common. Each man God used had a responsive heart ready to hear God and a life that was available to obey God. Each also possessed the integrity to honor God.

Talent and ability are not prerequisites to being used by God. Accomplishments, awards and recognition will not ensure kingdom usefulness: a “broken and contrite heart” does. The Lord looks at the condition of a man’s heart. “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind: (Jer 17:10). Because God is everywhere, any situation has the potential for becoming extraordinary. His very presence dramatically changes the circumstances. There is no limit to what will happen The Holy Spirit may point to symptoms that indicate a larger problem God’s Spirit may ask you to stop and deal with a issue in your character or behavior. The Bible is full of spiritual checkups to help us stay on track and in good spiritual health to understand our PyschoSocialSpiritual Condition.

David wrote, *Search me O God ad know my heart*

Test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me

And lead me in the way everlasting (Ps. 139:23-24)

God is interested most of all in the condition of your heart. In Acts 13:22 God testifies that in David. He found a man after His own heart, one that He could count on to “do everything I want him to do.” Would God find you to be such a man? The development of strong Christian character is the development of a man after God’s won heart. Your character is how you are, when no one is looking and what you are willing to stand for when someone is looking. Character occurs when there is consistency between actions and inner convictions over time. Strong Christian character is both the result of human effort and divine intervention. It is the work of God as you relate to Him in love. Strong Christina character is the result of your heart’s desire to obey God.

For example, think of two people in your life who show consistency between their actions and inner convictions Psychologically Sociological and Spirituality. Now thing about your own character. Do you show consistency between your actions (PsychoSocialSpiritual) and your convictions at home? At work/ in private? in your community?

Hebrews 4:13 says nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sigh. God know you inside and out. He knows your secret thoughts and feeling, your dreams and aspirations. God even knows of the inner demons that we all wrestle with from our past, present and even future. God know where your loyalties are and where your weakness cause you to stumble. He looks to see if you are trustworthy and faithful. He can do much through you if your character is right.

God is looking for men who have a desire to understand their purpose and who they are in God as well as with themselves. We must know who this man is.

In Samuel 16: 1-13, David relation to Saul, reflected upon the insecurity and self-worth of the African American Male. Perception plays a major role in our lives the way we look the way we present ourselves. And in some cases, who we are will be the first thing people see. Before you say a word, what does a person view? In some cases, you don't have to say a word for people to understand who you are. As African American Males, self-confidence is one of the keys to building a strong inner self of being. You must believe in who you are, just in who you are and stand upon who you are. You can't allow what others dictate to your life or experiences manipulate the possibilities that you can have in your life. Always remember, "*There is more to who you are than what others may even see.*" Samuel rightly feared Saul would kill him if he heard Samuel anointed another king of Israel. God instructs Samuel to say he has come to sacrifice. We are not obligated to reveal everything we intend when if all were known another might be moved to sin. Samuel met with Jesse and began to evaluate his sons, however as each one was introduced neither met the requirements.

One by one the sons of Jesse were introduced to Samuel. The manly beauty of Eliab, the eldest, and his rank in the family, suggested to the prophet that he might be "Jehovah's anointed." But Samuel was to learn that Jehovah's judgment was "not as what man seeth" (looketh to), "for man looketh to the eyes but Jehovah looketh to the heart." And so the others followed in turn, with a like result. Samuel expressed to Jesse that on that day one of his family was to be chosen by Jehovah, but for what purpose seems not to have been known to them. Jesse himself, neither David, apparently understood what was implied in the rite of anointing No

words of solemn designation were uttered by the prophet, such as Samuel had spoken when he anointed Saul (1 Sam. 10:1).

Besides, as Saul was the first king anointed, and as none had been present when it took place, we may reasonably suppose that alike the ceremony and its meaning were unknown to the people. Both Jesse and David may have regarded it as somehow connected with admission to the schools of the prophets, or more probably as connected with some work for God in the future, which at the proper time would be pointed out to them. Therefore, David in this respect whose human consciousness of His calling and work appears to have been, in a sense, progressive; being gradually manifested during His history. At the end, Samuel selected the one that was the last that became the first.

So then, how does this event of David reflect upon the insecurity and self-worth of the African American Male? There are many African American Males who have experienced set back, moments of inadequacy, or because of decisions made in their youth, are now experiencing the consequences that reflect the negative decisions of life. This is some cases leaves many African American Males with the mind set of “Non-self-Worth”, this is all I will ever be, maybe it’s better to resort back to my old way of life to make. However, we must understand that every situation we experience, every consequence we must accept or face because of our actions, can also be used as a building block to our success. We as African American Males in this 21st Century must come to the realization that we can create our future. We hold the key to who and what will become.

David was considered as the least one to be selected for greatest. David didn’t equal up the qualities that his brothers supposedly displayed, however, God saw more in David than he saw in himself. Many young and even older AAM who are a product of a non-productive

environment, gravitate to the notion, because of who I am and where I come from no one will ever believe in me, therefore leading many AAM to damaging penalties in life. Even more relative to David was the Psychological influence this had on David, acknowledging and accepting that he had an importance and something to offer others. In Romans 8:28 Paul states to the people of Roman, no matter what is occurring in your life, you must find the good. In all situations or decisions to be made find what is the lesson to be learned. Paul stated, “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” Does that mean the problems we experience are from God, does that mean God approves of the depraved differences we commit? No, but there should be a lesson learned and from that lesson we as AAM become stronger, greater and wiser. David became that such man. From his merger beginnings as a shepherd in the field tending to his father’s sheep, David learned the lesson of “Care”.

David watched over what was placed in his hands. David was responsible for the attention of the sheep. Thus, is the same with AAM we must take responsibly first for ourselves, what are we doing with our lives? Secondly, what is my plan? Will I remain in the same position or will I move forward? Lastly, what can I learn from the mistakes I’ve made in the past? We should not live in the past, the past is gone, however, those events that occurred in our past should help with the decisions of the present. David allowed his beginnings to support his future as a Man who became one of the greatest leaders.

Moment of Reflection - Identity and Self Esteem Building – “I know my Self Worth” It’s not who you are but whose you are

It is easy to fall into a trap of trying to live up to someone’s standards. We try to look good for other people. We play at popularity games and try to impress others with our position and prestige. This is a, because who we should really be trying to please is God. He has created each of us with special gifts and talents, and it is His will that we do nothing more than live up to the potential He created for us. We don’t have to try with God to be something we’re not. He knows us better than we know ourselves. What is important for us to do is find out who we really are and try to remain true to that identity. God loves us just as we are, and as long as we believe that God knows what He is doing, we can be satisfied with ourselves as He created us.

Men of David: Lord, help us to realize my potential. Make me less a person-pleaser and more a God-pleaser. Grant that might discover my gifts and talents, then assist me to use them as you would have them used.

Program Objective

Social Character Building – “It’s my Life” What can you Do?

Outcome: Participants will experience social and character skills building activities and engagement to develop personal social skills where as they understand the responsibility of decision making through “It’s my Life” How did David develop this area in his life?

Outcome scripture: *1 Chronicles 22: 1-19*

Gibbs's classic 1988 book, Young, Black, and Male in America: An Endangered Species, brought much needed attention to the status of young African American males and suggested that there had been marked deterioration compared with past generations. Compared with earlier cohorts, young African American males were more likely to be unemployed, involved in the criminal justice system, unwed fathers, and victims of homicide and suicide. Almost 25 years later the status of African American boys and men continues to be an issue of significant concern. For example, African American men have the shortest life expectancy of all race/gender groups (National Center for Health Statistics, 2005).

In 2006, the rate of new HIV infection for African American men was six times higher than European American men, nearly three times that of Hispanic/Latino men and twice that of African American women (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2010). Further, African American men are six times more likely than European American men to be incarcerated (National Urban League, 2007).

The growth rate of African American men enrolling in college is the lowest among minority groups in the United States (Harvey, 2003). While these data are discouraging, other research has highlighted strengths, progress, and psychosocial patterns characterized by resilience. Compared with the national averages, African American men had lower rates of

alcohol use and binge drinking from 2004–2008 (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Service Administration, 2010), and lower rates of mood disorders than both African American women and Whites (Breslau, Su, Kendler, Aguilar-Gaxiola, Kessler, 2005; Brown & Keith, 2003; Robins et al., 1984; Williams et al., 2007). Additionally, African American unwed fathers are more likely to live close by and visit their children than Hispanic and White fathers, as well as pay child support at higher levels (Lerman, 1993).

Lastly, between 1980 and 2000, the number of Black men who enrolled in college grew by 37% (Harvey, 2003). Given the admittedly mixed findings regarding the status of African American men, researchers have attempted to understand those factors contributing to disparities in health and psychosocial functioning. Most frequently researched have been sociodemographic factors including age, socioeconomic status, employment status, marital status, and education level.

Social science scholars and researchers have attempted to understand and describe those psychosocial factors that are to African American men's functioning given the structural contexts of their lives. This body of literature has tended to center on four themes: African American men's constructions of manhood and masculinity, male or masculine identity, racial identity, and the effects of traditional masculinity ideology.

When wronged by someone what does it leave you with? How does it make you feel? When in the presence of the person that has wronged you, how do you handle the situation? Do you feel, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"? As African American Males we must learn how to work through our difficulties with those who have taken advantage or either tried to set us up for failure.

As with the masculinity that David exhibited in his person, so it is with us as African

American Males. Our Masculinity can become the deterrent to our success in the future, if not externalize in a positive way. Masculinity ideology refers to men's acceptance or internalization of a culture's definition of masculinity and beliefs about adherence to culturally defined standards of male behavior (Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993). Although there are many masculinity ideologies, the masculinity ideology that has been examined most within the literature has been referred to as "traditional," which has been described by several researchers (e.g., David & Brannon, 1976; Franklin, 1984; Harris, 1995; Levant et al., 1992; O'Neil, 1981). Conceptual formulations of traditional masculinity ideology in contemporary American culture have focused on those standards and expectations that have various negative consequences (Pleck, 1995), including antifemininity, homophobia, emotional restrictiveness, competitiveness, toughness, and aggressiveness. At present there are seven commonly used scales measuring traditional masculinity ideology in the psychology of men and masculinity literature.

Research on African American men's masculinity ideology has found equivocal results. Some research findings indicate that African American men endorse a traditional masculinity ideology to a stronger degree than European American men yet, other findings suggest no differences between African American and European American men in the endorsement of traditional masculinity ideology. However, two studies addressing dimensions of masculinity indicated that African American men endorsed the norm of "status" at considerably higher levels than European American men (Campos, 1999; Lease, Hampton, Fleming, Baggett, Montes, & Sawyer, 2010). The masculinity norm of status concerns men's need to achieve status and others' respect (Thompson & Pleck, 1986).

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Prov. 16:32). God gave David the grace needed to show kindness to his

enemy, and this is even greater than defeating the giant Goliath. Saul's men had been lying about David and telling Saul that David was trying to slay him (24:9). If Psalm 7 fits into this event, as many students believe, then Cush the Benjamite was chief of the liars. This experience gave David opportunity to prove to Saul and the leaders that he was not trying to slay Saul, but that he honored the king even though the king was out of the will of God. David knew he had to forgive some people, however, he found himself face to face with one in a unexpected situation. Having taken care of the latest Philistine invasion, Saul heard that David was hiding in the wilderness of En-gedi. Pursuing him there, he happened to stop for a rest in the very cave where David was hiding. David's men urged him to seize this opportunity to kill Saul, but instead he merely cut off the edge of Saul's robe. He later regretted even taking such a harmless action against Saul, "the LORD's anointed one."

The hem of a robe was an important status symbol in those days. Cutting this part of the clothing was highly symbolic, explaining David's remorse. David passes the opportunity to kill Saul. "I just spared your life, so why do you seek mine?" David showed Saul the severed hem of his robe as evidence that he did not intend to kill him. Saul acknowledged that David was a better man than he, and was more fit to be king. 24:20 was Saul's first official admission that David was to be king, though he knew all along that this was God's will.

Having secured David's oath of nonaggression, Saul called off his pursuit and went home. From this point on, Saul would vacillate between hatred for David and sorrow for that hatred. David, evidently anticipating such changes, stayed in hiding. However, through his experiences, David learned how to take the situations of life to help me build a character to help others. In 1 Chronicles 22: 1-19 David's magnificent obsession was to build a temple for Yahweh. That he was forbidden to do. Nonetheless, he did everything he could to make that task

easier for his son Solomon. David wanted to provide experience and the necessities needed to his offspring to succeed after his departure of life. We as men must leave our sons a legacy or inheritance. Our life shouldn't stop with us, it should continue even as we have transitioned from this life. David knew that when he died a young and inexperienced Solomon would succeed him. The task of building a world-famous temple would be a challenge for any ruler. David determined that he would gather as much material as he could for the project before his death. David had a desire for his son Solomon and he was determine that Solomon would succeed. David charged his son Solomon to build a house to the name of Yahweh. He explained first why he himself had not undertaken the project. Not every project, vision, goal or dream is always completed by the one who has the design. Sometimes, we provide the vision, but the chosen one may perform the completion. And many of our young African American men are in the design phrase of life. The older men give the instructions and the younger men carry out the project. "Old men dream dreams, and young men see visions". David was an older man who still had dreams, but young Solomon had the vision. David prayed for his son Solomon that he would be successful. He instilled values of self-worth within his son. David expressed his prayer that Yahweh might be with Solomon, that he might be successful in building the house of Yahweh. He then prayed that Yahweh would give Solomon discretion and understanding in his governance of Israel. If the young man would be careful to observe the Mosaic law, he would prosper. There David urged his sons, in the same words which Moses charged Joshua, "*Be strong and courageous.*" If one knows that he is in step with God, he has no reason to fear whatever the future might hold.

Moment of Reflection - Social Character Building – “It’s my Life” What can you Do?

Solomon was able to give great wisdom because he was in touch with the source of wisdom-God.

As. Much as Solomon was willing to give himself to God, God was willing to give Himself right back. God showed that He was willing to do the same for us, by giving Himself in the person of His Son Jesus Christ. All we need do is accept His gift and try to the best of our ability to follow His example. Like Solomon, we receive strength and understanding from the God who gives us all good things.

Men of David: *Lord, I wish that I could be one with your spirit, that I might spread your will in this world. You offer so much, and I take so little. Help me to use what you hold forth, that I might reflect the blessed light of your Son, Jesus Christ, throughout this world.*

Program Objective

Interpersonal Relationships – “Developing my Connections” “Love will get you in trouble when relating to the opposite sex in one of the undisciplined areas of your life”

Outcome: Participants will learn skills to develop healthy interpersonal and social relationship with family member, friends and associated “Developing my Connection” How did this affect the life of David?

Outcome scripture: *2 Samuel 11: 1-26*

Interpersonal skills are measures of how adept you are at interacting with others. Active listening is an interpersonal skill, as is knowing how to communicate to someone else that you respect him or her. When problems arise, you use your interpersonal skills to resolve conflict with others. People learn interpersonal skills by interacting with family members, going to school, and socializing with their peers. Healthy interpersonal skills reduce stress, resolve conflict, improve communication, enhance intimacy, increase understanding, and promote joy. Some examples of Interpersonal Skills could be but limited to; Communication skills involve both listening and speaking effectively, Assertiveness skills involve expressing yourself and your rights without violating others' rights, Conflict is natural and inevitable. Conflict resolution skills help you resolve differences so that you may continue a relationship effectively. Anger management skills involve recognizing and expressing anger appropriately to achieve goals, handle emergencies, solve problems and even protect our health.

A look at David's life suggests several possible answers, some more satisfying than others. For one thing, through David we are reminded that God is a realist. His Book contains no

“let’s-pretend” whitewash of believers. Noting this, we may be helped to appreciate the fact that we can come to this God despite our own weaknesses. God won’t overlook them. But He won’t be crushed by our failures either. God knows that “we are dust” (Ps. 103:14).

For another thing, a revelation of saints’ failures as well as successes helps us to identify with them. If a David or an Abraham were represented as spiritually perfect, you and I would hardly feel close or like him. The truths that God is teaching us through their lives might be seen but might not be thought of as relevant. After all, we might think, “That’s all right for a spiritual giant like David! But what about poor, struggling me?” Then we discover that David struggled too. And sometimes he lost out to his weaknesses. David did know sin’s pull, just as we do. His experiences are relevant to us!

This familiar story recalls a time when David was in Jerusalem rather than with his campaigning armies. From the roof of his palace, David noticed a beautiful woman bathing, and he sent for her. When she became pregnant, he ordered her husband Uriah home from the front, so the adultery might not be discovered. But Uriah was a dedicated man: he would not enjoy the comforts of his home or wife while his companions were camped in the open before the walls of an enemy city.

Desperate now, David sent secret orders to his commander to place Uriah in an exposed position, so the enemy might kill him. After Uriah’s death, Bathsheba was taken into David’s house as one of his wives. And the Bible tells us, “The thing David had done displeased the Lord” (2 Sam. 11:27).

Now came a confrontation between David and Nathan the prophet, who was sent to announce God’s judgment on the king. David had violated the sanctity of the home; his own home now would produce evil.

This judgment needs to be a natural consequence of David's act; his own disrespect for the divinely ordained family pattern would bear its own bitter fruit.

David's immediate reaction is revealing. Unlike others who struck out in anger against such prophets and condemned them, David immediately confessed his sin and admitted the rightness of God's judgment: "David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord'" (2 Sam. 12:13).

David's confession brought him forgiveness. But it could not change the course of events his choices had set in motion. David would not die, but the child Bathsheba had conceived would die. One-day David would go to be with the son whom the Lord had taken, but that son would never know David on earth (v. 23).

Scripture tells this story simply. All the facts are recorded. No cover-up is attempted. Meditating on the incident, David was led to make the fullest possible revelation of his inner thoughts and feelings. We find them in Psalm 51, a psalm later used in public worship! We see timeless themes in Psalm 51, and find guidance to help us realize how we ourselves are to approach God when we sin. As the analysis of this psalm shows, David's reaction is appropriate for us too when we fall short.

David had penetrated to the heart of the issue. His was no mere legal relationship with some "bookkeeper God" who cares only about balanced books. David did not rush to ask what he could do for God to make up for his sin! Instead David realized that God's concern is personal rather than legal in nature. A contrite heart means more to God than all anyone might possibly do for Him.

With David's heart attitude corrected, forgiveness could flow, and the Spirit of God could work again to cleanse David. When he was cleansed, God would work through David to do good for Zion and for all his people.

Moment of Reflection Interpersonal Relationships – “Developing my Connections

Sin is like a web. As we become occupied with the things we should not be doing, we become oblivious to the dangers that surround us. We feel that we are in control when in fact we are in a very precarious, unwanted position. As African American Men if we are not careful we become “holden with its cords,” and we cannot get loose. Ultimately, we must answer for our actions before God our higher creator. If we do not repent or even acknowledge our misdeeds, they become a noose around our neck, and through our madness we find ourselves hopelessly separated from the one who is leading and guiding our lives daily. It is good that we always pay attention to the ways we live our lives. It is when we grow complacent that we stand in the greatest danger of losing that which is most important.

Men of David: *I turn my attention to so many things that I should not. My sight is distracted by so much foolishness. Forgive me when I stray and shine forth your great light that I might follow its beam back to the source of all life.*

Program Objective:

Employment Skills – “It’s my Responsibility”- “God blesses those who are intention about what they want” If a man doesn’t work a man doesn’t eat.

Outcome: Participants will develop employment skills that will assist them in the areas of employment seeking, interviewing, employment maintenance and personal acceptance within the employment identified. How does this relate to the “Men of David”

Outcome will be supported by the scripture: 2 Thessalians 3:1-12 AMP “*For even while we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.*”

The worldwide recession that began in November 2007 did great economic damage to many people, business firms, industries and even nations. However, the damage done to African American men in the United States was particularly severe. African American men lost jobs, their unemployment rate more than doubled, millions simply dropped out of the labor force, and their incomes grew more slowly than those of any other major racial or ethnic group.

Between 2007 and 2009, the unemployment rate for African American men increased 9.1 percent to 17.5 percent. The percentage of African American men employed relative to their population declined from 58.4 percent to 53.7 percent.

What is playing out before our eyes is nothing less than a societal tragedy. Most of the readers of the State of the Region report do not find themselves in such unfortunate circumstances and therefore can, if they so choose, avert their eyes. Literally, we can collectively

“drive by” and continue our respective ways to our more comfortable circumstances.

Nevertheless, there are inevitable costs associated with the economic plight of many African American men. Few American citizens and virtually no taxpayers can avoid the costs that come with the deteriorating economic circumstances facing many African American men. Shattered lives, broken families, disadvantaged children, school dropouts and an increase in contacts with the criminal justice system these are among the frequent results.

Yet, as Mitch Albom put it in his book “The Five People You Meet in Heaven,” “We are all connected ... You can no more separate one life from another than you can separate a breeze from the wind.” If nothing else captures the attention of society, then this should. When government is pushed to find resources to support those who do not have regular employment and steady incomes, either higher taxes or a deterioration of services is the almost inevitable consequence. Thus, there is a fiscal bottom line associated with the plight of African American men and, quite apart from humanitarian considerations, this should capture the attention of those who otherwise might choose to “drive by.”

The differentially large and negative impact the recession had upon men has prompted some to talk of a “manceession.” Employed men tended to dominate occupations in manufacturing and construction that lost the most jobs, while employed women tended to dominate occupations in education and the health professions that shed the fewest jobs. A recent study published by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (*The Regional Economist*, July 2010) documented that the deindustrialization associated with the recession was particularly destructive to African American men, who were overrepresented in the occupations that contracted the most.

Particularly disturbing is the reality that these changes merely accelerated longer-term movements in the same direction. For decades, the unemployment rate of African American men has been edging upward compared to other men, and for many years, ever-smaller proportions of

African American men have entered the labor force. The median weekly earnings of full-time African American male employees grew much more slowly than those of any other major racial or ethnic group between 2000 and 2009.

There are other unfortunate social consequences associated with low educational attainment. Among the most pressing are high rates of contact with the criminal justice system and low rates of marriage. Graph 6 depicts the disproportionately high rate of incarceration of African American men compared to other major racial and ethnic groups. Fully 4.75 percent of adult African American men were in jail in 2009, according to the Department of Justice (“Incarceration in the United States,” www.wikipedia.com).

Reality is that this not only seriously diminishes the economic prospects of those who are institutionalized, but it also destroys families. Even when these individuals leave prison, they operate at a disadvantage. An unpublished 2006 study (Finlay, University of California, Irvine) estimated that criminal background checks, which have become a routine part of preemployment screening, lower the relative employment of young black men by more than 2 percent in states where the records of former criminal offenders are available on the Internet, when compared with states where this information is not available online. Criminal records relentlessly follow those who have been imprisoned.

Not so coincidentally, high rates of incarceration of African American men mean that fewer get married, or stay married. Low marriage rates result in approximately 70 percent of African American babies being born to parents out of wedlock and 84 percent of all single-parent African American families being headed by a woman (Census Bureau, 2010). Of course, there are economic consequences as well. Almost 30 percent of these single-parent families end up in poverty, as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Today, it is no secret that many Black male-female relationships are in turmoil. African Americans have the highest single-parent-household percentages in the country. We have continuous representation of conflicting relationships in the media, and those conflicts continue into the community. So, from where does this come?

Local counselor Sam Simmons states that this all began with slavery. Simmons says, “On the plantation, the slave master asked for big mama, not big daddy.” Simmons, an expert in historical and generational trauma, believes that the extreme stress conditions that enslaved Africans experienced shaped their behaviors to cope. These behaviors became their culture over time and have manifested in many ways.

Simmons is licensed as an alcohol and drug counselor with over 25 years of experience as a behavioral consultant in the areas of chemical dependency, violence abatement and historical trauma. He specializes in practical, culturally sensitive, trauma-informed work with African American males and their families.

Simmons also contends that the practices and customs developed during slavery helped start the rift between Black females and males. This idea is also expressed in the Willie Lynch doctrine that became popular in the 1990s. It highlights the idea that women were expected to play stereotypical male roles and males to play stereotypical children roles.

It is unclear if this gender divide came about deliberately or by happenstance. Either way, the effects are evident in outcomes of today typical Black female and male relationships. This has led to confusion, misunderstanding, and division amongst Black females and males. These outcomes are not favorable to the health of the Black community.

Black women have become the “last bastions of hope” for the Black community.

Historically, Black males collectively have been crippled economically, educationally, and socially in many areas, which has forced Black females to step up and take a pseudo-patriarchal position. Black women have become the main breadwinners, nurturers, healers and protectors of the Black community.

This one-sided support goes against the societal norm, making it a struggle to compete and maintain equality with other ethnic groups. Black males are statistically below women in many economic and academic achievement areas. This begs the question of what are Black males to do?

Some constructive suggestions for Black males moving forward are: 1) having men engage one another about advancing the standard of manhood, 2) listening to what our female counterparts are saying, and 3) developing balance and boundaries amongst each other.

Black males must take responsibility and accountability for themselves. We can't be individuals — we must function as a brotherhood. If we do not, our families and communities will suffer.

If Black women must assume more than the societal expectation for women, the community will continue to struggle. Both Black women and men must place a greater emphasis on building an affluent community. The responsibility and accountability cannot be left to one gender.

Black males hold a pivotal role in the advancement of the Black community. We do not need just one man to stand up and be the hero. We need many men to stand up and show the way.

The roles of fathers have been ignored too long in the social science literature, particularly in family studies. The dynamics of the roles of fathers in all ethnic groups—especially African Americans—have changed dramatically over the years. The purpose of this article is to explore the roles that African American fathers play in families—whether present or absent in the day-to-day running of the household. These roles must be examined in relation to the many persons who may be part of today's family: mother, grandparents or other relatives, and friends. This article also explores why African American men are invisible or absent players in the family dramas that take place every day.

Over the last several decades, changes have occurred in almost all-American families because of economic factors. It is increasingly difficult for one parent to earn enough a living wage to support an entire family. Jobs have gone off shore, companies have been down-sized, and entire industries have been mechanized. Those at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy—particularly poor persons of color—have faced the most negative effect. Most mothers of young children are now employed at some level outside the home, marriages and relationships have been truncated and changed, children are being cared for through a variety of arrangements, and parents of both genders have had to become involved in family tasks. These are patterns that have existed within the African American community for decades.

African American fathers are as different from one another as they are from other groups. They come in all shades, shapes, and types, yet the stereotyped Black father is seen—by those who are not of color—as a visitor to his family, underemployed, marginal to his family, inattentive to his children, rather violent, and plainly not in the family picture. African American fathers are as dedicated to their children and families as are men of other racial groups; some are models of perfection, and some are deadbeats.

An important issue is why the negative image of Black males and fathers is so strongly embedded in the psyches of lay and professional family social scientists. The reasons lie in three historical circumstances: economic isolation; enslavement; and the carryover of African family forms that differ from Western forms. The contemporary portrayal of African American men in the media only adds to the negative images. The ultimate reason is racism that they face throughout their lives. This racism has isolated them from the world of work and education and is seemingly ingrained in the fabric of Western societies.

The widely held ethnocentric view is that a traditional family is an independent residential unit with two parents, and a mother who is not employed. Even though we know that historically this has not been the pattern for all families, it is still presented as the ideal. In past times, women on the farms and in rural areas worked as hard as their husbands, families were often extended, and roomers in the home were commonplace. Yet, we are presented with a romantic version of family.

A report about child-rearing practices from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development contradicts the traditionalist view. It concludes that young children cared for by adults other than their parents have normal cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development. In addition, the quality of infant care—which ranges from poor to excellent—greatly influences the development of young children, and good quality day care can to some extent make up for poor parenting (Scarr, 1997). We can no longer say that children need fulltime maternal care, and most of both parents who work can feel more assured. Indeed, children may benefit from multiple attachments, rather than an exclusive attachment to their mothers.

The roles of fathers in families are influenced by internal as well as external factors

(Bowman, 1993; Hyde, Texidor, 1994; J. McAdoo 1988, 1993). Research has shown that social capital networks, in the form of coping strategies and community-wide resources, help to mediate negative external influences that may interfere with the parenting role (J. McAdoo, 1993; Hanshaw & Thompson, 1996). Furthermore, Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, and Lewis (1990) stated that significant growth has occurred in the quality and quantity of African American family life. Fathers, though, are often overlooked by researchers, professionals, and practitioners (McComanachie, 1994).

The reasons for African American fathers being away from their children are linked to external factors: unemployment; imprisonment; high death rates; and the imbalance of the malefemale ratio. Joblessness among Black men meant separation from their families to qualify the mothers for state aid. Historically, Black males have always been incarcerated at a higher rate than those of White males (Ross, 1996). Black men in Michigan die prematurely at twice the rate of White men and the rest of the state's population (Bauza, 1997). Traditionally there have been more women who are marriageable than men (Chapman, 1996). Therefore, some children are born to older women who do not expect to marry the fathers of their children.

The family structure of Black children in 1996 differed drastically from the White population. Whereas of 71.6% of White children under age 18 live with both parents, only 38.7% of Black children do; 5 6.9% live with their mother. The 3.9% of Black children who live with their fathers only is comparable the White rate of 3.4%. Grandparents parented 5.4% of the Black children and 1.3% are in foster care (Bureau of the Census, 1996b; Children's Defense Fund, 1997).

A major difference between Black fathers and other groups at the same income level is that fewer Black fathers live in the same home as their children. Black families did not differ significantly from mainstream families until 1970, when the majority still had two parents.

Modifications in their structure and orientations then occurred as the result of a series of recessions in the 1970s, which became depressions with the Black community (Hill, 1988). These changes also occurred within mainstream families in the late 1980s and began to be even greater in the 1990s.

Much has changed for African-Americans since the 1963 March on Washington (which, recall, was a march for “Jobs and Freedom”), but one thing hasn’t: The unemployment rate among blacks is about double that among whites, as it has been for most of the past six decades.

In 1954, the earliest year for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics has consistent unemployment data by race, the white rate averaged 5% and the black rate averaged 9.9%. Last month, the jobless rate among whites was 6.6%; among blacks, 12.6%. Over that time, the unemployment rate for blacks has averaged about 2.2 times that for whites.

The widest gaps, when black unemployment was as much as 2.77 times that of white unemployment, came in the late 1980s, as the manufacturing sectors that employed disproportionate shares of African-Americans shriveled. The smallest gaps, ironically, came in the summer of 2009 during the Great Recession; white unemployment rose so high, so fast, that the black jobless rate was “only” 1.67 times higher.

The black-white unemployment gap appears to have emerged in the 1940s, according to a 1999 analysis of Census data. Although labor economists, sociologists and other researchers have offered many explanations for the persistent 2-to-1 gap — from the differing industrial distribution of black and white workers to a “skills gap” between them — there’s no consensus on causes. One 2011 working paper, after reviewing existing research on wage and unemployment differentials among blacks and whites, concluded that “none of the existing models of race discrimination in the labor market explains the major empirical regularities.”

One common explanation, as William A. Darity Jr. of Duke University told Salon in 2011, is that blacks are “the last to be hired in a good economy, and when there’s a downturn, they’re the first to be released.” A 2010 article testing that “last hired, first fired” hypothesis against panel data from the Current Population Survey (from which the unemployment rate is derived) found considerable support for the “first fired” part but not for the “last hired” part: Blacks are in fact disproportionately likely to lose their jobs as the business cycle weakens, but the hiring side is more complex: “Early in the business cycle, those blacks with a stronger attachment to the labor force (i.e., the unemployed) are the first hired. Blacks who are nonparticipants tend to be hired late in the business cycle when labor demand is particularly strong.”

This is a very strong and authoritative word; it denotes standing beside someone like a drill sergeant and telling him what to do. Paul uses it seldom, and only when he wants to be very serious and very authoritative. To make this commandment even more authoritative it is given in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This important, indirect command is completed by the infinitive of another unusual word for Paul, that ye withdraw yourselves which denotes disassociation. The word is used only one other time in the New Testament, and even there it does not have this sense of ecclesiastical separation or censure. Other strong words are also used in this commandment; walketh disorderly indicates a continual pattern of life which is “not subjected” to and cannot be subjected to the authority of Christ. It is also noteworthy that the synonymous descriptive clause uses the cognate noun and verb for the authoritative “traditions” of the gospel. The obvious implications are that the message that was preached by the apostles was the Word of God; it was authoritative, inspired, and canonical. If a person refuses to submit to the authority of the Word of God, he is “walking disorderly.”

In this Paul reminds them that they must follow the apostolic pattern; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly (a cognate form is used). While the apostles were in Thessalonica they supported themselves, working hard day and night so that their demands upon the community would not be too great. Paul states again that as apostles, they had the authority to have both their wages and expenses paid by the community. They had purposely avoided using this privilege for the benefit of the Thessalonians.

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. Again, the word commanded refers to the problem that arose while the apostles were still present in Thessalonica, namely that some people got so excited about the second coming of Christ they decided to quit work and just wait. It should be noted that Paul does not say that if they could not work they should not “be allowed” to eat, but rather that if anyone did not want to continue working he should decide to stop eating also. Paul has heard that some people have disobeyed his former injunction against that sort of attitude and that they have become busybodies. They seem to have been the ancestors of some today who are so heavenlyminded that they are of no earthly good.

According to verse 11, this sort of super-spirituality is really pride and a refusal to submit to the authority of God’s Word; the same word disorderly is used again (vs. 11), along with the word for a “strict command” which is given in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 12). The opposite of that sort of conduct is to eat one’s own bread, which he earns by means of working at an occupation while he quietly serves the Lord.

KJV Bible Commentary. 1994 (E. E. Hindson & W. M. Kroll, Ed.) (2490). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Moment of Reflection Employment Skills – “It’s my Responsibility”- “God blesses those who are intention about what they want” If a man doesn’t work a man doesn’t eat.

God, the Higher Authority in our lives, made His creation and He saw that it was good. He gave dominion over the earth to men and women to share with them how good it was. Our lives are creation of God, and they too are good. It is important that we embrace the goodness of our lives and thank God daily for what we have been give. As African American Men, it is not good to sleep throughout the bulk of our lives. We should “Wake Up”. Wake up to the creation that God has given us. It is good, and it is right in front of us to enjoy and take hold of. It was out of God’s love for us that our world was given, and it should be from love that we return thanks to Him.

Men of David: What a wonderful world you have made. Let me look at the world through your eyes in order that I might see it in all its freshness and light. I rejoice in your glory now and always.

Program Objective:

Problem Solving – “Working through my Difficulties” “Great growth will come from great grief. If you find yourself in the mist of great trials, it’s because there is going to be great growth.”

Outcome: Participants will develop problem solving skills through identifying areas of their life that are a struggle. Participants will develop techniques to defuse the following: anger, hate., rage, trust and positive engagement. How did David maintain his integrity, or did he have challenges?

Outcome scripture: Psalms 62: 1-12

As David's enemies conspired to dethrone him (62:4; see 2 Sam. 15; 20), he found refuge in God (62:1–3). He had learned that from God's perspective, his seemingly powerful enemies were no more than mere vapor (62:9). On the other hand, he had learned to trust in God as “a rock where no enemy can reach me” (62:7), and he wanted his readers to learn such trust as well (62:8).

All humans are situated in an historical as well as a cultural process. Any understanding of African American men is predicated on an understanding of African American history and culture. This means that counseling approaches must be based on an understanding of and sensitivity to the personal history of African Americans. Young African American men in contemporary society face many challenges that may have an impact on their development. Manhood historically has not been a birthright for the African American male.

Given the forces that impinge on the development of African American men, it is imperative that committed counselors help them develop attitudes and behaviors that help them function at optimal psycho-social levels in a demanding world. African American men run into great difficulty as they grow older and become stronger. The chief problem is that they are nurtured in a hostile and non-supportive environment. The environment often includes poverty,

criminal justice, unemployment, inequitable educational opportunities, and negative media images.

A male's gender identity- his masculinity- has been and continues to be volatile. It has to be earned and proved on a day-to-day basis. A man can't just be masculine, he must constantly "prove" it. The socially prescribed male behaviors require men to work against the fulfillment of certain needs and to be competitive, aggressive, and to evaluate their life successes in terms of external satisfaction. Every man is caught in this no-win bind: if he lives out society's prescribed role requirements his basic human needs are unfulfilled. On the other hand, if these human needs are satisfied there is a chance that he may be judged, or may judge himself, not to be a real man.

Being emotionally inexpressive is a vital part of the very nature of "manliness." Balswick (1982) calls it "male inexpressiveness" and defines an inexpressive male "as one who does not verbally express his feelings, either because he has no feelings or because he has been socialized not to." Skovolt (1978) defines the phenomenon as "restrictive emotionality" since men appear to have difficulty expressing feelings openly, giving up emotional control and being vulnerable to self, others, and new experiences.

Many men, socialized to ignore feelings and become out of touch with their bodies, do not recognize internal stress, strain, and symptoms of sickness. If men are aware of these inner distress signals, they refuse to accept these signs of poor health, thus opening themselves up for cancer, strokes, breakdowns, heart attacks, and even suicide. The notion that sex role expectations are at least equally as strong for men as they are for women and that men experience similar pressures to conform their behavior to these expectations has led some to suggest that counseling may also function to reinforce a traditional role for men.

Strongly related to the issue of Black masculinity are the problems encountered on the path to manhood. Few Americans are unaware of the presence of young African American men and they are generally regarded as a source of tension in the social structure.

To God alone David looks in patient calmness, waiting for the deliverance which will surely come. The three titles for God (“rock,” “salvation,” and “high tower”) are also found in 18:2. The term rock conveys the strength, faithfulness, and unchangeableness of Yahweh. Nothing could move David from his reliance on the Lord.

Enemies kept hammering away at David with the intent of slaying him as if they were battering down a leaning wall. Such efforts are futile. The plot against the king is the result of gross hypocrisy and duplicity. The adversaries pronounce blessing on the king with their lips, but plot murder against him in their hearts.

It is only by constant self-exhortation that the calmness of v. 1 can be maintained. David repeats vv. 1–2 with slight variation which may reveal growing faith. Earlier he stated that he would not be greatly moved from his position of trust in God. Now he simply says: “I shall not be moved.”

David exhorts his fainthearted followers, who were in danger of being carried away by the show of power on Absalom’s side. He urges them to “pour out” their heart, i.e., all their anxiety, before the Lord. He reminds them that God is their refuge. “Selah” indicates a musical interlude at this point.

David admonishes his followers not to put their trust in man. Whatever their rank, wealth, or power, men are merely a breath which vanishes away. They have no weight or substance to tip the scales. Waverers would be influenced by seeing many leading men on Absalom’s side.

David urges that they should not trust in wealth accumulated by oppression and robbery. Some were being tempted to covet the power which wealth brings, no matter what might be the means used for obtaining it.

“Once, yes twice,” i.e., repeatedly, God had spoken, and David has heard the double truth which supplies the answer to those who are tempted to trust in ill-gained wealth. Both power and lovingkindness belong to the Lord. He is both able and willing to “render to every man according to his work.” The punishment of the wicked and the reward of the faithful attest God’s power and love.

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Moment of Refection Problem Solving – “Working through my Difficulties” “Great growth will come from great grief. If you find yourself in the mist of great trials, it’s because there is going to be great growth.”

Self-control is an important part of the Christian’s life. As African American Men it is a constant and consistent struggle many AAM face daily. Christ had many occasions when He could have lost control and wreaked havoc on His enemies. That would have destroyed His mission on earth: to teach love and provide an example for how we should live our lives. Anger is a natural reaction, but it cannot be allowed to take control of us. When we live by our passions, we live on the danger line, and eventually we will fall prey to sin. The wise person learns to respect the power of his emotions, and he departs from situations where he might lose control.

Men of David: Save me from myself. When anger rises within my heart, help me to control it and channel it in constructive ways. Do not let it be a captive to my passions.

Program Objective:

Family/Fatherhood – “I’m held accountable” “If God can order the season and all of nature, can’t God also maintain order in your life?”

Outcome: Participants will learn the theory of spending and saving. Participants will take part in a group activity to demonstrate the difference in spending all that you have and saving some of what you have. Participants will gain knowledge of creative ways of saving to gain an increase. And does this relate to the “Men of David”

Outcome scripture: *Sam 7:12-14.* David: The absentee but not permissive father. What is most incredible about this, is that David is likened unto God, the Father and Solomon is likened unto Jesus in 2 David fulfilled many aspects of his role in antitype to God, but failed as a father.

In Charles M. Blow’s article Black Dads Are Doing Best of All (June 2015), Charles M. Blow addressed that one of the most persistent statistical bludgeons of people who want to blame black people for any injustice or inequity they encounter is this: According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (C.D.C.), in 2013 in nearly 72 percent of births to non-Hispanic black women, the mothers were unmarried.

“It has always seemed to me that embedded in the “If only black men would marry the women they have babies with...” rhetoric was a more insidious suggestion: that there is something fundamental, and intrinsic about black men that is flawed, that black fathers are pathologically prone to desertion of their offspring and therefore largely responsible for black community “dysfunction.”

There is an astounding amount of mythology loaded into this stereotype, one that echoes a history of efforts to rob black masculinity of honor and fidelity. Josh Levs points this out in his new book, “All In,” in a chapter titled “How Black Dads Are Doing Best of All (But There’s Still a Crisis).” One fact that Levs quickly establishes is that most black fathers in America live with their children: “There are about 2.5 million black fathers living with their children and

about 1.7 million living apart from them.” Blow goes on to discuss further that 72 percent of black children are born to single mothers? So, to the African American Male and his community, how can both be true? Here are two things to consider:

First, there are a growing number of people who live together but don’t marry. Those mothers are still single, even though the child’s father may be in the home. And, as The Washington Post reported last year:

“The share of unmarried couples who opted to have ‘shotgun cohabitations’ — moving in together after a pregnancy — surpassed ‘shotgun marriages’ for the first time during the last decade, according to a forthcoming paper from the National Center for Health Statistics, part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

Furthermore, a 2013 C.D.C. report found that black and Hispanic women are far more likely to experience a pregnancy during the first year of cohabitation than white and Asian women.

Second, some of these men have children by more than one woman, but they can only live in one home at a time. This phenomenon means that a father can live with some but not all of his children. Levs calls these men “serial impregnators,”

As Forbes reported on Ferguson, MO.: *“An important but unreported indicator of Ferguson’s dilemma is that half of young African-American men are missing from the community. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, while there are 1,182 African-American women between the ages of 25 and 34 living in Ferguson, there are only 577 African-American men in this age group. In other words, there are more than two young black women for each young black man in Ferguson.”*

In April, The New York Times extended a line of reporting, pointing out that nationally, there are 1.5 million missing black men. “Incarceration and early deaths are the overwhelming drivers of the gap. Of the 1.5 million missing black men from 25 to 54 — which demographers call the prime-age years — higher imprisonment rates account for almost 600,000. Almost one in 12 black men in this age group are behind bars, compared with one in 60 nonblack men in the age group, one in 200 black women and one in 500 nonblack women.” For context, there are about eight million African-American men in that age group overall. Mass incarceration has disproportionately ensnared young black men, sucking hundreds of thousands of marriage-age men out of the community.

The drop in the birthrate for unmarried black women is mirrored by an even steeper drop among married black women. Whereas at one point married black women were having more kids than married white women, they are now having less.” This means that births to unmarried black women are disproportionately represented in the statistics.

The mythology of the black male dereliction as dads: while it is true that black parents are less likely to marry before a child is born, it is not true that black fathers suffer a pathology of neglect. The C.D.C. reported issue in December 2013 found that black fathers were the most involved with their children daily, on several measures, of any other group of fathers — and in many cases, that was among fathers who didn’t live with their children, as well as those who did. There is no doubt that the 72 percent statistic is real and may even be worrisome, but it represents more than choice. It exists in a social context, one at odds with the corrosive mythology about black fathers.

The roles of fathers have been ignored too long in the social science literature, particularly around family studies. The dynamics of the roles of fathers in all ethnic groups—

especially African Americans—have changed dramatically over the years. The purpose of this article is to explore the roles that African American fathers play in families—whether present or absent in the day-to-day running of the household. These roles must be examined in relation to the many persons who may be part of today's family: mother, grandparents or other relatives, and friends. This article also explores why African American men are invisible or absent players in the family dramas that take place every day.

Over the last several decades, changes have occurred in almost all-American families because of economic factors. It is increasingly difficult for one parent to earn enough a living wage to support an entire family. Jobs have gone off shore, companies have been down-sized, and entire industries have been mechanized. Those at the lower end of the occupational hierarchy—particularly poor persons of color—have faced the most negative effect. Most mothers of young children are now employed at some level outside the home, marriages and relationships have been truncated and changed, children are being cared for through a variety of arrangements, and parents of both genders have had to become involved in family tasks. These are patterns that have existed within the African American community for decades.

African American fathers are as different from one another as they are from other groups. They come in all shades, shapes, and types, yet the stereotyped Black father is seen—by those who are not of color—as a visitor to his family, underemployed, marginal to his family, inattentive to his children, rather violent, and plainly not in the family picture. African American fathers are as dedicated to their children and families as are men of other racial groups; some are models of perfection, and some are deadbeats.

An important issue is why the negative image of Black males and fathers is so strongly embedded in the psyches of lay and professional family social scientists. The reasons lie in three historical circumstances: economic isolation; enslavement; and the carryover of African family

forms that differ from Western forms. The contemporary portrayal of African American men in the media only adds to the negative images. The ultimate reason is racism that they face throughout their lives. This racism has isolated them from the world of work and education and is seemingly ingrained in the fabric of Western societies.

The widely held ethnocentric view is that a traditional family is an independent residential unit with two parents, and a mother who is not employed. Even though we know that historically this has not been the pattern for all families, it is still presented as the ideal. In past times, women on the farms and in rural areas worked as hard as their husbands, families were often extended, and roomers in the home were commonplace. Yet, we are presented with a romantic version of family.

A report about child-rearing practices from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development contradicts the traditionalist view. It concludes that young children cared for by adults other than their parents have normal cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development. In addition, the quality of infant care—which ranges from poor to excellent—greatly influences the development of young children, and good quality day care can to some extent make up for poor parenting (Scarr, 1997). We can no longer say that children need fulltime maternal care, and most of both parents who work can feel more assured. Indeed, children may benefit from multiple attachments, rather than an exclusive attachment to their mothers.

The roles of fathers in families are influenced by internal as well as external factors (Bowman, 1993; Hyde, Texidor, 1994; J. McAdoo 1988, 1993). Research has shown that social capital networks, in the form of coping strategies and community-wide resources, help to mediate negative external influences that may interfere with the parenting role (J. McAdoo, 1993; Hanshaw & Thompson, 1996). Furthermore, Taylor, Chatters, Tucker, and Lewis (1990)

stated that significant growth has occurred in the quality and quantity of African American family life. Fathers, though, are often overlooked by researchers, professionals, and practitioners (McComanachie, 1994).

The reasons for African American fathers being away from their children are linked to external factors: unemployment; imprisonment; high death rates; and the imbalance of the malefemale ratio. Joblessness among Black men meant separation from their families to qualify the mothers for state aid. Historically, Black males have always been incarcerated at a higher rate than those of White males (Ross, 1996). Black men in Michigan die prematurely at twice the rate of White men and the rest of the state's population (Bauza, 1997). Traditionally there have been more women who are marriageable than men (Chapman, 1996). Therefore, some children are born to older women who do not expect to marry the fathers of their children.

There are certain topics that tend to make us feel uncomfortable and money management is such a topic. The subject of money; how we use it, and abuse it, is closely related to our style of functioning and has many ramifications.

There are those who look at money as a tool for enjoyment and pleasure and therefore spend little time planning for the future. There are others who fear running out of money to the extent that they become penny pinchers and don't allow any expenses for self-enjoyment without feeling guilty.

Most of us however, can relate to the anxiety around how we are managing our money. No matter how small our income may be, the ability to know what our expenditures are and how much can be saved or trimmed is important to know. We need to take a serious look at our income and determine our spending habits. We will then be able to decide where we can cut back, save, or expand. In other words, we can learn to take better control of the way we manage money.

Everyone is called to be accountable in some way. Husbands and wives are accountable to be faithful to each other. Children are called to be accountable in their obedience to parents. Employees are called to be accountable to their employers and students are called to be accountable to their teachers.

Why is it necessary to be accountable? Most likely, if we didn't have to be accountable to someone—many of us would live lesser lives. We wouldn't work too hard because it wouldn't matter as much. Having a relationship with the Lord doesn't insulate us from needing accountability. We can deceive ourselves because of the weakness of our flesh and we can be deceived by our enemy, Satan. Every believer needs at least one person in their life who pulls no punches when it comes to speaking the truth in love.

Money is a very little thing (Luke 16:10). Why? Because money cannot buy happiness. Money cannot give eternal life nor real meaning in life (Isa. 55:1-3; Rev. 3:16-18). Yet, there is nothing that reveals our spiritual orientation and relationship with God like our attitude toward money.

Jesus Christ made it clear that a mark of true spirituality was a right attitude toward wealth. The mark of a godly and righteous man is his preoccupation with God and heavenly treasure.

Without planning based on biblical values, goals, and priorities, money becomes a hard taskmaster and, like a leaf caught up in a whirlwind, we get swept into the world's pursuit of earthly treasures (Luke 12:13-23; 1 Tim. 6:6-10).

Financial planning is biblical and is a means to good stewardship, to freedom from the god of materialism, and a means of protection against the waste of the resources God has entrusted to our care (Prov. 27:23-24; Luke 14:28; 1 Cor. 14:40).

Financial planning should be done in dependence on God's direction and in faith while we rest in Him for security and happiness rather than in our own strategies (Prov. 16:1-4, 9; Psalm 37:1-10; 1 Tim. 6:17; Phil. 4:19).

If our financial planning is to work, it will require discipline and commitment, so our plans are translated into actions. We must follow through on our good intentions (Prov. 14:23). Financial faithfulness is an important aspect of complete, well-rounded spiritual growth and godliness (2 Cor. 8:7). But godliness requires discipline (cf. 1 Tim. 4:8; 6:3-8).

Good intentions are useless without plans that translate them into actions. The Corinthians had indicated their desire and willingness to give and had even been instructed on planned giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2), yet they had failed to follow through on their good intentions (2 Cor. 8:10-11).

Financial faithfulness ultimately flows out of the recognition that everything we are and have belongs to the Lord (1 Chron. 29:11-16; Rom. 14:7-9; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Life is a temporary sojourn in which Christians are to see themselves as aliens, temporary residents, who are here as stewards of God's manifold grace. All we are and have—our talents, time, and treasures—are trusts given to us by God which we are to invest for God's kingdom and glory (1 Pet. 1:17; 2:11; 4:10-11; Luke 19:11-26).

One of God's basic ways to provide for our needs is through work—an occupation through which we earn a living, so we can provide for ourselves and our families (2 Thess. 3:6-12; Prov. 25:27).

The money we earn is also to be used as a means of supporting God's work and helping those in need, first in God's family and then for those outside the household of faith (Gal. 6:6-10; Eph. 4:28; 3 John 5-8).

Saving for the future is responsible stewardship when designed to meet both the predictable and unpredictable needs of the family (1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Cor. 12:14). Saving for the future shows wisdom and is demonstrated in God's creation the wise preserve wealth (21:20). "There is valuable treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a fool of a person swallows it up." Through wise stewardship a godly person can accumulate a store of desirable articles. "Oil," a symbol of comforts, is an example of that treasure. A fool soon runs through and exhausts all that has been accumulated. As men it is our responsibility to understand how to use our resources to support the responsibilities that we have acquired. Whether it's within the marriage experience, family or supporting our personal lives, we must learn the value of faithful in our finances. In James, James 4:13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into this or that town and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." 14 You do not know about tomorrow. What is your life like? For you are a puff of smoke that appears for a short time and then vanishes. 15 You ought to say instead, "If the Lord is willing, then we will live and do this or that."

James began chapter 4 talking about war with God, and he ends it talking about the will of God. But the two themes are related: when a believer is out of the will of God, he becomes a troublemaker and not a peacemaker.

Lot moved into Sodom and brought trouble to his family. David committed adultery and brought trouble to his family and his kingdom. Jonah disobeyed God and almost sent a shipload of heathen sailors into a watery grave. In each case, there was a wrong attitude toward the will of God.

That God would have a plan for each of our lives is an obvious truth. He is a God of wisdom and knows what ought to happen and when it should occur. And, as a God of love, He

must desire the very best for His children. Too many Christians look on the will of God as bitter medicine they must take, instead of seeing it as the gracious evidence of the love of God.

“I would give my life to the Lord, but I’m afraid,” a perplexed teenager told me at a church youth conference.

“What are you afraid of?” I asked.

“I’m afraid God will ask me to do something dangerous!”

“The dangerous life is not in the will of God,” I replied, “but out of the will of God. The safest place in the world is right where God wants you.”

I was going through a difficult time in my own ministry some years ago, questioning the will of God. While on vacation, I was reading the Book of Psalms, asking God to give me some assurance and encouragement. Psalm 33:11 was the answer to that prayer: “The counsel of the Lord standeth forever; the thoughts of His heart to all generations.”

“The will of God comes from the heart of God,” I said to myself. “His will is the expression of His love, so I don’t have to be afraid!” It was a turning point in my life to discover the blessing of loving and living the will of God.

In this section of his letter, James pointed out three attitudes toward the will of God. Of course, only one of them is the correct one, the one that every Christian ought to cultivate.

Perhaps James was addressing the wealthy merchants in the assembly. They might have discussed their business deals and boasted about their plans. There is no evidence that they sought the will of God or prayed about their decisions. They measured success in life by how many times they got their own way and accomplished what they had planned.

But James presented four arguments that revealed the foolishness of ignoring the will of God.

The complexity of life (v. 13). Think of all that is involved in life: today, tomorrow, buying, selling, getting gain, losing, going here, going there. Life is made up of people and places, activities and goals, days and years; and each of us must make many crucial decisions day after day.

Apart from the will of God, life is a mystery. When you know Jesus Christ as your Savior, and seek to do His will, then life starts to make sense. Even the physical world around you take on new meaning. There is a simplicity and unity to your life that makes for poise and confidence. You are no longer living in a mysterious, threatening universe. You can sing, “This is my Father’s world!”

The uncertainty of life (v. 14a). This statement is based on Proverbs 27:1 “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” These businessmen were making plans for a whole year when they could not even see ahead into one day! See how confident they were: “We will go. We will stay a year. We will buy and sell and make a profit.” Their attitude reminds us of the farmer in the parable of Jesus in Luke 12:16–21. The man had a bumper crop; his barns were too small; so, he decided to build bigger barns and have greater security for the future. “And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry’” (Luke 12:19).

What was God’s reply to this man’s boasting? “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee” (Luke 12:20). Life is not uncertain to God, but it is uncertain to us. Only when we are in His will can we be confident of tomorrow, for we know that He is leading us.

The brevity of life (v. 14b). This is one of the repeated themes of Scripture. To us, life seems long and we measure it in years; but in comparison to eternity, life is but a vapor. James borrowed that figure from the Book of Job where you find many pictures of the brevity of life.

“My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle” (Job 7:6). “The cloud is consumed and vanisheth away” (Job 7:9). “Our days upon earth are a shadow” (Job 8:9). “Now my days are swifter than a post” (Job 9:25), referring to the royal couriers that hastened in their missions. “They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey” (Job 9:26). “Man, that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not” (Job 14:1–2).

We count our years at each birthday, but God tells us to number our days (Ps. 90:12). After all, we live a day at a time, and those days rush by quickly the older we grow. Since life is so brief, we cannot afford merely to “spend our lives”; and we certainly do not want to “waste our lives.” We must invest our lives in those things that are eternal. God reveals His will in His Word, and yet most people ignore the Bible. In the Bible, God gives precepts, principles, and promises that can guide us in every area of life. Knowing and obeying the Word of God is the surest way to success (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:3).

The frailty of man (v. 16). “As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil” (NIV). Man’s boasting only covers up man’s weakness. “Man proposes but God disposes,” wrote Thomas Á Kempis. Solomon said it first: “The lot is cast into the lap: but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord” (Prov. 16:33). Man cannot control future events. He has neither the wisdom to see the future nor the power to control the future. For him to boast is sin; it is making himself God.

How foolish it is for people to ignore the will of God. It is like going through the dark jungles without a map, or over the stormy seas without a compass. When we visited Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, I was impressed with the maze of tunnels and the dense darkness when the

lights were turned off. When we got to the “Pulpit Rock,” the man in charge of the tour gave a five-word sermon from it: “Stay close to your guide.” Good counsel indeed!

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Jas 4:13–16). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Smith, J. E. (1996). The wisdom literature and Psalms. Old Testament Survey Series (Pr 21:20). Joplin, MO: College Press Pub. Co.

Moment of Reflection Family/Fatherhood – “I’m held accountable” “If God can order the season and all of nature, can’t God also maintain order in your life?”

Families should be havens of love and support. We should learn what love is all about from our families. We should also learn what it means to truly love others, whether they deserve it all the time or not. Unconditional love means love which doesn’t ask anything in return. We are called

up to love all people regardless of whether they are worthy of it. As AAM, this is the love which God gives to each of us, and it is a love that He hopes we will use in our relationships here on earth. A house which is built upon kindness and understanding is a fortress against all the evil on the world. A good home is a blessing beyond words. Establish a home in true love, and its benefits will last forever.

Men of David: Teach me what it means to love unselfishly. Help me to judge no one, and to love everyone that I can. Forgive me when I am unliving, and fill me with your spirit that I might grow in your ways.

Program Objective:

Spirituality – “Who is your higher power?” God does the calling, but you do the choosing. God calls you, but then you must choose whether you want to go God’s way.

Outcome: Participants will have a study and discussion pertaining to what spiritual being they identify in their lives. There will be an open forum discussion on various religions and how do

they relate to the “Men of David” What or who was David’s Spiritual identity or higher authority in his life? Who did David appeal or in during challenges, difficulties and struggles.

Outcome Scripture: *Psalms 61: 1-8*

The importance of religion and spirituality is typically a strength in the lives of African Americans. Spirituality may be an important part of their survival system and a coping mechanism for distress. Spirituality and religion can also be a source of comfort and support in times of emotional distress. Religion and spirituality often play a major role in the couple relationship and are associated with greater marital trust (Boyd-Franklin, Kelly, & Durham, 2008). Boyd-Franklin, Kelly, and Durham (2008) suggest that spirituality can be a tool to cope and give understanding to the challenges of life, but can also cause distress when clients spiritualize problems or passively trust that their problems will be resolved. For many African Americans, the church is an extended family and the minister has central authority role in their lives.

Historically, the Black church was the first institution that belonged exclusively to African-Americans, and allowed them to emphasize aspects of Christianity that were unique to their cultural legacy (Cook & Wiley, 2000). The institution of the church serves as a coping mechanism in handling the pain of racism and discrimination, assists in coordinating social justice efforts and provides a place to survive and deal with painful life experiences (BoydFranklin, 2003). The African-American church often plays a central role in the lives of many of its members, providing spiritual refuge, counseling, and social activities. Weekly, if not nightly, participation in church services and activities is common, as many African-American churches provide worship and social services 7 days a week (Boyd-Franklin, 2003; Cook & Wiley, 2000).

Churches also provide social services and resources to the broader African-American community, serving non-church members as well as regular church members. Boyd-Franklin (2003) notes that Black churches have become “multifunctional community institutions” that provide social activities, schools, political activities, and positive role models for young people. These programs address the economic, education, and emotional health of community members. Through outreach programs to the broader community, African-American churches can begin to develop relationships with the unchurched. The church is a place where many African Americans can feel respected for their talents and abilities, and achieve status as a deacon or member of the pastor’s council, providing an important source of leadership experience (BoydFranklin, 2003). Positions of power in the church, amidst the economic and occupational powerlessness of a racist society, denote a sign of status and leadership.

There can be some confusion as to whether there is a direct connection between spirituality and religion. Spirituality and religion on the surface might seem to be synonymous. When the term spirituality is used in most instances it is usually connected to religion. The religious person might be spiritual, but a spiritual person might not be religious, and vice versa.

In a research study performed by Dale S. Burgess, Colorado State University with African American Males determining what is Religion and Spirituality, participants provided their own definition of spirituality or their own spirituality. This was important because it appears that a definition of what spirituality is can vary from individual to individual. Moreover, connecting spirituality to the leadership practices of male African American leaders is virtually absent from the literature. The impact of spirituality on leadership is discussed in a variety of writings by Bolman and Deal (1995) and Conger (1994) as well as others. But its impact on decision making is not well represented in the literature.

Fairholm (1997) believes that “spirituality is the essence of who we are. It is our inner self, separate from our body” (p. 6). Fairholm further suggests “our sense of spiritual wholeness defines humankind, determines our guiding values, and directs our most intimate decisions and actions” (p. 7). Griffin (1988), too, believes spirituality refers to the “ultimate values and meanings in terms of which we live, whether they be otherworldly or very worldly ones, and whether or not we consciously try to increase our commitment of those values and meanings.

While spirituality can be the byproduct of religion, the terms spirituality and religion is often used interchangeably. Rosener (1998) believes that you cannot talk about spirituality without talking about religion because the two have for so long been linked. However, Rosener suggests they are not the same. Spirituality is not a religious philosophy, but rather can incorporate religion as the foundation to create a meaningful, compassionate environment. Guillory (1997) believes “religion is actually a form that spirituality takes in practice. Spirituality is the source behind the form” (p. 21). Spirituality is something that can naturally become a part of the way leaders manage. While religion may serve as the basis for a spiritual experience, the two are not mutually exclusive.

Lerner (2000) differentiates between spirituality and religion in this way: “Spirituality is a lived experience, a set of practices and a consciousness that aligns us with a sense of sanctity of All being... Religions, on the other hand, are the various historical attempts to organize a set of doctrines, rituals and specific behaviors that are supposed to be “the right way to live” (p. 5).

According to Klenke (2003), organized religion is dependent on rituals and dogma. It is more about rites and scriptures and tends to be “dogmatic, exclusive, and narrowly

based on a formalized set of beliefs and practices” (p. 57). In the workplace, Rosener (1998) believes that in general, when people talk about spirituality at work, they are trying to instill or impose their religious values on the corporate climate. Fernando et al. et al. (2006) sees the connection between spirituality and religion and believes that the literature on workplace spirituality has been a byproduct of studies in religion and psychology.

Bolman and Deal (1995) explore the complexities of integrating spirituality into leadership. They believe spirituality is the goal, religion is the path. The word religion describes a group of people bound by a vision of the divine expressed through shared beliefs, institutions, rituals, and artifacts. Every great religion offers special gifts, based on a unique spiritual tradition (Bolman & Deal, 1995). Spirituality, however, is not the same as religion. Chaleff (1998) suggests that Spiritual acknowledges that there is something sacred about life itself. It acknowledges that, whatever its source, this sacred element is within oneself and within each living being. It understands intuitively that regardless of extreme differences, we share a commonality. From this sacred commonality springs core values of human decency. And if we honor these values, they inform our decisions and relationships. (p.

9)

Who or what do you find refuge in during your challenging moment of life? Who or what do you seek guidance when faced with major decisions of life? How you address those past mistakes that didn't have a positive outcome, that just might affect your present and future? Feeling overwhelmed, David sought refuge in the “rock” of God’s strength. David was at a place where God seemed far away. He wanted more than a return to Jerusalem or another opportunity to worship in the tabernacle. He longed for a greater sense of God’s loving presence, protective care, and strengthening grace. So, he prayed that distance would be transformed into intimacy. David’s experience of this refuge encouraged him to keep putting his trust in God.

Despite the constant dangers, David faced, God did “add many years to the life of the king.

Moment of Reflection Spirituality – “Who is your higher power?” God does the calling, but you do the choosing. God calls you, but then you must choose whether you want to go God’s way. Good enough empathy is rooted in an awareness that although we are wounded and hurting, we have taken time to tend to the wounds. As African American Men, the healing of our wounds means they can be a source of healing for those whose wounds are like ours. Good enough empathy means we have had our wounds transformed from sources of personal weakness to reservoirs of strength for those in need.

Men of David: Allow the spirit of your high power to heal those wounds, lesions, hurts, and deep embedded infections of life, so you can become a Man that can say “I’m Good Enough”. God

has seen more in me than what I could ever see.

Goals For the “Men of David”

1. How will Success be measured?
2. Mastery of Core Conditional Areas
3. Demonstration of ability to apply “Life Lesson” to everyday personal development.
4. Demonstration of “Life Lessons” through group discussion

CHAPER 5

EVALUATION PROCESS

Method of evaluation 1

In September, participants will be given a pre-and post-test evaluation at the beginning of each session to measure the understanding and retention of the information provided.

In March, participants will be evaluated through the Six-month after care evaluation.

Pre-Test Questions:

1. How would you describe your current condition of life?
2. What has been your most difficult set-back in life?
3. Where do you see yourself in 2,4,6 years? List at least 2 goals for each year.
4. What would you consider your greatest weakness?
5. What is your current age?
6. Where are you in your family? Father, son, brother, uncle,.etc.

Post Test Questions:

1. From the life lessons discussed, which life best related to your current condition in life?
2. Which life lesson do you feel as if you would least benefit from?
3. How does David's life in reflect relate to your own experiences?
4. What was your personal identity with David?
5. Where do you see yourself in 2, 4,6 years? List at least 2 goals for each year 6. What is your current age?

CHAPTER 6

MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

Theologian

Rev. Richardson will use his theological education define the background on the life of David as it reflects the lives of the men who will participate in this project.

Preach/Interpreter of Sacred texts

Rev. Richardson will teach simplistic lesson of understanding to the life of David, whereas men within the program will understand the text selected for the program and life reflection.

Worship Leader

As a Pastor, Rev. Richardson should incorporate a moment of worship or group reflection to create an atmosphere that is non-threatening and conducive for open discussion.

Prophetic Agent

Rev. Richardson will use his spiritual gifts to observe the psychological, sociological and spiritual developments of the participants on a prophetic bases.

Leader

Rev. Richardson will lead the participants by example

Religious Educator

Rev. Richardson will incorporate religious activities to support the development of the participants within the program that will assist in their own personal religious and spiritual development.

Counselor

Rev. Richardson will use his counseling experience to listen and assist participants in their decision-making process

Pastor

Rev. Richardson will avail himself as an extensional pastor to the men within the project as an individual for guidance, support and spiritual enrichment where as needed.

Spiritual Leader

As a Spiritual Leader, Rev. Richardson will guide participants in their spiritual development as African American Men and use the tools learned from David to create a stronger spiritual man.

Ecumenist

Rev. Richardson will assist the participants in their development and understanding of religious practices as it refers to the life of David.

Witness or Evangelist.

Within the context of the Men of David, Rev. Richardson should work with individuals, teaching lessons or providing mentorship must be willing to confess his or her fundamental faith commitment.

Administrator

Rev. Richardson will assist participants with setting realistic goals and outcomes for participants.

Professional Skills

Rev. Richardson will assist participants in developing their personal skills though the usage of Life-Skills building activities.

Pastoral Skills

One of the key competencies needed within Men of David is an ability to provide pastoral care that respect diversity and difference including. But not limited to culture, gender, sexual orientation and spiritual/religious practices.

Interpersonal Skills

Rev. Richardson's Interpersonal Skills development should provide males with the tools needed in building the self-worth of an individual.

Faith-Rooted Community Organizer

Having a clear understanding of the life of David. Rev. Richardson will be challenged to explain and compare David's purpose, frailties, abilities, strengths and weakness, success and failures are important to the development of the young men within the program.

Competencies Chosen for Development

Theologian

Ecumenist

Prophetic Agent

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Timeline

1. Does your timeline take into consideration all the tasks you must complete from the date your Demonstration Project Proposal is approved to the submission of your first full Demonstration Project draft to?

Weekly research and development will occur at least 3 hours (M,W,F) Research editor will receive project information weekly for editing.

Site team will work as a hands-on team for completion of the project.

2. Does your timeline take into consideration the different phases of preparation, implementation, evaluation, writing, etc.

Candidate will present weekly reports to advisor and site team as requested.

Prepare monthly group activities along with pre-and post-testing information.

Groups will be presented either bi-weekly or monthly depending upon the participants in the program. It is preferred weekly group session to make a connection of the material presented and follow-up

3. Does your timeline take into consideration the times you will meet with your advisor, your Site Team and other persons who will assist you in completing your project.

Meetings with the Site Team will occur monthly as well as weekly follow-ups on the progress of the program.

Advisor Meeting will occur bi-weekly (weekly if advisor request) to discuss the progress, strengths and weakness of the program and personal development working with the program.

Advisor will also be present for group activities for supervisor and have debriefing after groups.

Appendix 2

Budget

1. Based on the activities in your Plan of Implementation have you included the resources you will need to complete each item.

Men of David Project Budget

Project Site Cost	(in-kind)
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Project Study Materials	2152.50
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Project Presentation Materials

Pens	32.00
Paper/Printing	383.25
Flip charts	63.00

Markers	20.00
USB Drives	32.37
Projector	(in-kind)
Refreshments	1278.24
Advertisement	
Social Media	(in-kind)
Post Cards	328.00
Mailing	175.00
Ice-Breaker Materials	210.00
Guest Presenters	1325.00
Group Outing	1650.00

Total Budget for Men of David (6-month program) **8,686.36**

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August 12, 2015 by Brandon Jones

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